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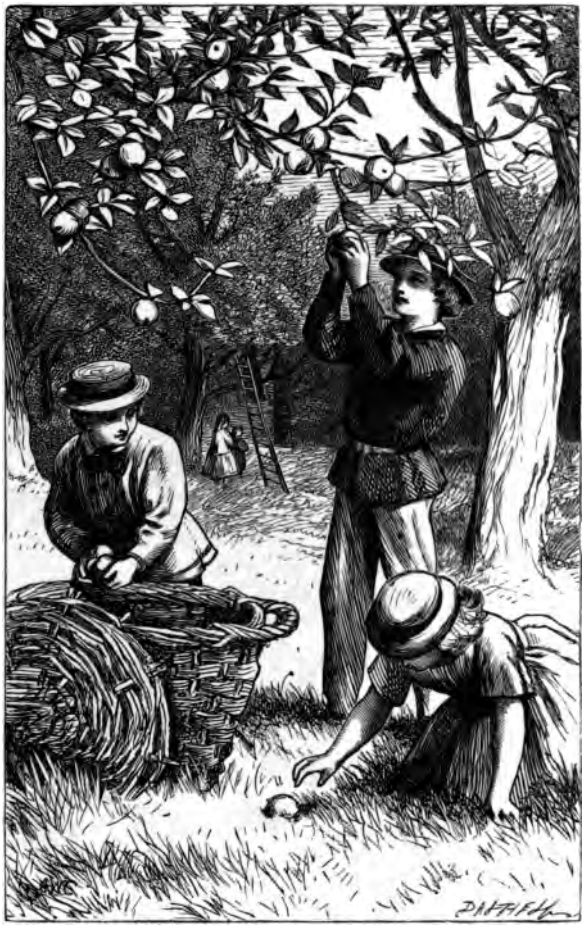

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C. D. BELL


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THE GRAHAMS;

OR,

HOME LIFE.



Front. Apple Gathering. P. 393.

HE GRAHAMS;

OR,

HOME LIFE.

BY

CATHERINE D. BELL,

HOR OF "HOPE CAMPBELL," "THE HUGUENOT FAMILY," "KENNETH AND HUGH," ETC.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.





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PREFACE.

THE series of juvenile Tales, of which "The Grahams; or, Home Life" is the first, was written by the late Miss Catherine D. Bell, under the name of "Cousin Kate."

Their aim is to teach, in the attractive guise of fiction, the holiest and noblest truths, and to show how character is formed, faults cured, and virtues attained, by God's discipline of daily life.

The Publishers hope that this new and improved Edition will be received by the juvenile public with the favour they have hitherto accorded to all stories written by COUSIN KATE.

THE GRAHAMS.

CHAPTER I.

HARRY'S PLAN.

"HOW very late papa is this forenoon!" exclaimed Allen Graham, as he sat with his brothers and sisters in their father's study, waiting for his joining them, to begin the lessons of the day.

"So he is, Allen," said Mr Graham, who just then came into the room; "and what makes the matter worse, I shall be obliged to dismiss you at twelve o'clock to-day. Plenty of time, Georgie," he continued, smiling, to a quiet-looking little boy who sat near his chair, "plenty of time to see the little rabbits before going to your formidable dinner-party."

"O papa," said Eleanor, eagerly, "it is such a beau-

tiful day; and when we are to go out so early, we should like very much if you and mamma could take a nice long walk with us."

"I should like it very much too, Eleanor; but the only reason for my dismissing you earlier than usual, is to allow mamma and me to go to M——, and be back in time for dinner. But now we must all be very busy, and get as much done as possible."

All the children were very industrious and attentive; and when twelve o'clock struck, and Mr Graham gave the signal to close their books, he said he was both surprised and pleased to find how much had been accomplished. Books, atlases, slates, &c., having been put in their respective places, and luncheon over, the party separated. Georgie and Lewis, who were engaged to dine that day with an old lady in the neighbourhood, ran down to the court-yard to see a young family of rabbits which their old ones had that morning presented them with. Allen went to play on the lawn with little Gracie, the pet of the family; while Harry paced up and down the hall, waiting for the girls to come down-stairs. Never a very patient young gentleman, he was even more impatient than usual this day, because he had a grand plan in his head, and was in a great hurry to communicate it to the others. He began to knock a stick against the bannisters of the stairs, and

to call to them to make haste, when a door up-stairs opened, and he heard some one coming down. It was only his mamma. "Harry," she said, smiling, "I do not think that disagreeable noise will at all help the girls to get ready, and you are chipping the paint off the stairs. Do try to be a little more reasonable; they have not had time to put on their bonnets yet."

"You are ready, mamma, and they went upstairs as soon as you did."

"Yes, but they have been assisting me; however, here they are; so away you go, and enjoy this very fine day."

Even Harry, with all his impatience, agreed that the first thing to be done was to see their rabbits; but when they had coaxed the mother to come off her nest to feed, and had all peeped at the little ones, and when Eleanor had comforted Georgie, who, being very shy, was a good deal distressed at going out to dinner; then he thought they should set out on their walk directly, and have a long talk about his fine scheme. The girls and Allen, however, decided that it was absolutely necessary to go first to their garden, and repair any mischief that might have been done by the high wind of the preceding night. They generally paid a visit to it in the morning before breakfast, but this morning the agreeable surprise of finding a family of young rabbits had made *them forget* it altogether. Kamford, where my young

friends lived, was a very beautiful place; and the children's garden was in the prettiest part of the grounds. It was on a bank sloping down to the south, and at the bottom, between it and the house, there was a beautiful stream, which though scarcely broad enough to be called a river, was yet too deep and strong to be termed a burn. Its name was the Karn; and whether we call it river or burn, it was a very beautiful object in many parts of the grounds, and nowhere more beautiful than at their garden. Although Harry had followed the others somewhat unwillingly, yet he was well pleased they had gone, when he found that a tall lily of some new species, which had been given to him, and which was just going to flower for the first time, was blown over. The stem was not at all broken, however, nor the forming flower injured; and when they had propped it up with stronger sticks, and had gone all over their little domain, they were quite ready to follow Harry, and listen to his plan. He led them a little farther down the river side, and into the footpath leading into the wood. This was a very favourite walk. The wood was very extensive, stretching up the hill; and every now and then there were little openings, giving peeps of the valley below. It was to one of these openings, pretty far up the hill, that Harry led his party, and there disclosed his plan. It was to ask papa to give them the

whole plot of ground, and they would build a house and make a garden; "and when you get your bantams, Eleanor, we will make a poultry-yard, and keep them here." The other children entered most warmly into the plan. It was a lovely spot Harry had fixed upon. There had been an old quarry there; and it would make such a nice sheltered spot for a garden at the foot of the rock; then they would plant honeysuckle, creeping roses, and clematis, to grow up the face of the rock; and there was a pretty little fall of water just behind where their house would be.

"Will papa give us this, do you think, Harry?"

Harry had asked him about it; for he had been walking with him the day before, when the idea first occurred to him; but Mr Graham had given him no decided answer; he had laughed, and said he could not afford to give them piece after piece of his land in that way, and that if he gave it to them, he thought it must be on some sort of feudal tenure; he thought they must agree to give him so many days' labour in return. The idea of this rather increased than diminished the children's pleasure, and they talked with great glee of having a regular deed made out, giving it to them, and binding them to so much labour in return.

"But," said Marion, "it must be all settled to-night, *for I heard papa* tell mamma this morning, that he was

going to London to-morrow. I quite forgot about it till now."

The children looked a little vexed on hearing this, for it was always a distress to them, their kind, merry papa going away from home. They talked over their plans a little longer, and then after a further walk returned by the same path to see the spot again. They lingered so long that they had to walk very fast home to be in time for dinner. On coming to a spot from which they had a view of the stables, they saw, by the carriage standing there, that papa and mamma had arrived. The boys began to run, they were in such a hurry to hear about papa's going to London. Eleanor and Marion were tired, and followed more slowly; but as they were crossing the lawn they saw the boys coming back to meet them—Harry looking vexed and very impatient, and Allen, though a little vexed too, yet seemed half inclined to laugh at Harry's anger.

"What is the matter? have you seen papa?"

"No," said Harry, in a fretful voice; "that tiresome, disagreeable old fool, Mr Telfer, has come to dinner."

"O Harry, you should not call him an old fool; mamma would be very angry if she heard you say so."

"But he is such a tiresome, prosing creature; if it had *been anybody else* I would not have cared half so much.

But that is just the way, he always comes at the very time we do not want him."

"Oh yes," said Allen, laughing, "he has come on purpose to vex us. Did you not remark what a very sensible, observant countenance that crow had which was perched on the tree beside us, while we were settling our plans? You may be sure it heard all we said, and flew off to tell Mr Telfer, and that is the reason he has come to-day, just to prevent our speaking to papa about our place."

"Nonsense, Allen," said Harry, still more pettishly; "you are very unkind to laugh at my disappointment."

"But, Harry, dear," remonstrated Eleanor, "it is Allen's disappointment too. He only wishes to show you the folly of being cross at the thing we cannot help. It is all the more provoking, because it is Monsieur Candolle's night, and if we do not get an opportunity before he comes, we shall have no time to speak to papa afterwards."

M. Candolle was the French teacher in an academy at M——, and he came once a week for an hour to teach the little Grahams. As he came so seldom, he left them very long lessons to prepare; and Harry now suddenly remembered that he had neither prepared his translation, nor written his exercise. The recollection of this *increased his* vexation at Mr Telfer's ill-timed visit,

as from his being there, they would most probably be longer at dinner, and so he would have less time to prepare his neglected lessons. Mr Telfer was a very good and learned man, and Mr and Mrs Graham had a great respect for him; but certainly he was not a favourite with the children. He had a slow, absent, tiresome manner; and not being accustomed to young people, he did not at all understand how to entertain them. Every time he came he asked them the same questions, and always in the same slow drawling tone; and as these questions referred to things they thought much too childish for them, he both provoked them and made them inclined to laugh. On this day Harry thought him more tiresome than usual, prolonging the dinner hour, by stopping every now and then to explain something in his slow hesitating manner; "and things," as Harry, in his impatience, muttered, "that no one cares about." There was a clock near the dining-room door that sounded every quarter of an hour, and as quarter after quarter struck, Harry's impatience increased, till he could have cried with vexation. At last the wine was on the table, and soon after Mrs Graham rose and the children were free. It was very late by this time, and Harry had not finished preparing his translation when they were summoned to tea. Had Harry told his *mamma his distress* about his lessons, she would have

excused him from coming in to tea; but he knew that she would be much displeased with him for his idleness, and he preferred taking his chance of being able to coax Monsieur Candolle into forgiveness. At tea Mr Telfer was as tiresome as at dinner, and Harry soon rose to leave the table, but his mamma prevented him, saying gently, "it was ill-bred to leave the table before every one had finished tea." Thus compelled to sit down again, his impatience increased more and more; and at last, when Mr Telfer turned to him, and chucking him under the chin, as if he had been speaking to little Gracie, said, "Do you like books, Master Harry—only picture-books, I suppose?" Harry could bear no more, and, turning his head away with an impatient jerk, answered in a rude sullen tone, "I am sure I do not know anything about it."

The other children looked astonished at his rudeness. Mr Telfer seemed vexed at having failed in his attempt to entertain him, while Mr Graham said quietly, "You had better go away now, Harry; and you need not come back until you have learned to behave yourself properly."

Harry left the room, but he was too much vexed to be able to do anything; and when M. Candolle came, he was obliged to tell him he had not even begun to *write his* exercise. Monsieur was very angry, and he

had good cause to be so; for the week before, when he had been displeased with him for a very faulty exercise, Harry had promised if he would only forgive him that once, that he would write this one without a single error. Monsieur said he was so incorrigibly idle, that he could bear with him no longer, and was determined to complain of him to Mr Graham. He was strengthened in his resolution by Harry's very imperfectly prepared translation; and when the hour was over he desired Allen to ask his papa to speak to him. Mr Graham came down immediately, and looked very grave while Monsieur detailed all poor Harry's misdemeanours, concluding by saying, "He promised me, sir, to write this exercise without a fault, and now he has not written it at all, and when he breaks his promise, I cannot trust him again." Mr Graham did not speak to Harry; he thanked Monsieur for telling him, said they had always trusted the children to prepare their French lessons by themselves; but as Harry had proved he was not worthy of being trusted, either he or Mrs Graham would henceforth take care to ascertain that his lessons were properly prepared. He then accompanied M. Candolle to the door. Harry expected he would return and speak to him, but he went straight up to the drawing-room.

Harry felt very unhappy; he knew he had done wrong; but still he thought, "I would not have broken

my promise if I had remembered. It is very hard in papa to say that I am not worthy of being trusted; and this evening, which we thought would be so happy, has ended most miserably. Papa is going away to-morrow, too, and so I shall have no time to show him I am worthy of being trusted."

This last reflection made him so unhappy, that he could no longer restrain his tears, and he wept for some minutes very bitterly. He heard, from the sound of their voices in the drawing-room, that the others were reading their chapter aloud; and the remembrance of the kind indulgent way in which their papa and mamma listened to all their questions in their readings, and took so much pains to explain everything to them, increased his sorrow for having displeased them.

But he soon began to remember how often both his papa and mamma had told him, that the best way of showing sorrow for a fault was to try to remedy it; and the thought struck him that it would be a good plan to try to write his exercise now without a fault, and when it was finished to take it to his papa, and ask him to forgive him.

He was by this time very tired, and it was with great difficulty he persevered in his resolution; but at last it was finished, and with a somewhat lighter heart he ran *up-stairs.*

He had quite forgotten about Mr Telfer; but now, as he paused for a moment at the drawing-room door, to consider in what manner he would express his sorrow for his carelessness, he heard his slow tiresome voice.

"How could he go in and make his speech before him; besides, he had behaved ill to him too, and he must begin by apologising to him for his rudeness. Oh! he could not do that; he would wait till to-morrow morning, and see papa alone in his study before breakfast;" and he turned away from the door. But he had never in his life gone to bed without bidding papa and mamma good-night; and he knew how much it would vex mamma to think her little boy could go to bed without trying to repair his fault, or ask forgiveness.

"Oh! I must not do it," he thought; and going back to the room, he opened the door and walked boldly in without giving himself time to think. The silence that followed his appearance, and his papa's and mamma's grave looks, somewhat abashed him; but he advanced steadily to Mr Telfer, and said, though in rather a faltering voice, "I was very rude to you to-night, sir, but I am sorry for it, and I hope you will forgive me."

Mr Telfer's voice did not sound either slow or tiresome, as he said, shaking him warmly by the hand, "That I will, my fine fellow; and I see now I was *wrong in supposing* you would care only for picture-

books. It is only a manly boy who could apologise so honestly for his faults."

Harry now turned to Mr Graham, but he could get no further than—"Papa, I am sorry," tears stopped him, and he could only hold out his exercise.

Mr Graham took it without speaking; but he looked pleased when he saw what it was. He read it carefully through, and then said—"It is without a fault, Harry, and I am glad you have written it; your doing so convinces me more than any words can do, that you are sincerely sorry for your fault."

Harry began to feel happy again, and still more so, when his mamma held out her hand to him, and smiled upon him with such a kind happy smile, as told him how much pleased she was to see her little thoughtless Harry could exert such command over himself.

"Light a candle for me, Harry—bid mamma and Mr Telfer good-night, and I will hear you read in the study; for it is time you were in bed."

Harry obeyed very willingly, for he wished to speak to his papa alone, and ask him if he would take back these sad words, "Harry is not worthy to be trusted." And as soon as they were alone in the study, he began to speak: but his papa stopped him, saying, "My little man, you are tired and sleepy, we will talk about it *to-morrow* morning. Come to me here as early as you

like; I will only say to-night that I am well satisfied my Harry will be able to cure himself of his faults, now I see he has strength of mind to force himself to do what he sees to be his duty. I never thought your warm love for mamma and me would suffer you to remain contentedly under our displeasure. But your doing this exercise for M. Candolle, and apologising to Mr Telfer, convinces me that the dictates of mere duty are beginning to have their due influence on your mind; and you do not know, my dear boy, how happy this conviction makes me."

"But, papa," said Harry, colouring very much, and with hesitation, "I do not think it was any feeling of duty that made me do either. I was very sorry to have grieved you, and that made me write the exercise; and then you know, papa, I think, if I could have told you and mamma how sorry I felt for all I had done to vex you, without apologising to Mr Telfer, I am afraid I would never have said anything to him."

"At any rate," said his papa, kindly, "I may rejoice that I have an honest candid boy, who will not even take what he values so much, the approbation of those he loves best, when he feels he does not deserve it. One word more, Harry; you have asked forgiveness of Mr Telfer, of mamma and me, but there is another you have offended."

"You mean God, papa; but we will ask Him together to forgive me, will we not?"

"Yes, my boy, I hope you will never forget that; but it was not God I meant."

Harry coloured very much; he understood Mr Graham, but it was very painful to him to think of doing what he saw he meant.

"Papa, you mean M. Candolle, but he is so stiff and proud, quite different from you, and then, he will think"——

"Harry," said Mr Graham, "I have not *desired* you to ask pardon of M. Candolle, so you need not make excuses to me; settle the matter with your own conscience; only remember that the difficulty of a duty has nothing to do with the question whether it be your duty or not; if it be very difficult, you have the more need to seek strength out of yourself; and I think, Harry, you know where to seek it. And now, my boy," he continued, after a few moments' silence, "if this matter is too much on your mind to allow you to think of what you are going to read, I will leave you for a little to make up your mind, for we must never read the Bible with a divided attention. But if you can collect your thoughts sufficiently, I think we may perhaps find something here that might help you to make a right *decision*."

Harry said he could attend, and they began to read a few verses in the 42d of Isaiah. It would have been difficult for him not to attend, Mr Graham spoke about them so affectionately and earnestly; and when he spoke of the spiritual way in which they applied to our Saviour, as well as of his literally opening the eyes of the blind, pointing out to him how beautifully there was here promised light to guide us in all our conduct, and God's Spirit to free us from the bondage of our own sinful hearts, and from the temptations of Satan; Harry felt that it must be his own fault if he decided wrong; or, if he did not do what he knew to be right, it would only be because he did not choose to seek strength which was so freely offered to him. Then Mr Graham knelt down and prayed with him earnestly, that they might be all led in every act of their lives to look to that Holy Spirit for guidance and strength, and that, seeing Christ's great love to them in coming into the world to die and purchase all this for them, they might be enabled to give themselves up in all things to serve and love Him, having every feeling brought into subjection to Him.

"Good-night, papa; I will go to-morrow morning before breakfast," said Harry, as they rose from their knees.

"God bless you, my boy, and give you strength to do His will," said Mr Graham; "and remember to-night,

when praying in your own room, to ask again for strength to keep your resolution."

Harry found Allen awake when he went up to his bed-room, and told him all that had passed, and that he had determined to go early the next morning to see M. Candolle, to give him his exercise, and apologise for his idleness and carelessness.

"I must rise very early," he said, "as I wish to be back in time to have a nice long talk with papa before breakfast."

"Would it not do after lessons to-morrow? M. Candolle will not be up so early."

"No," Harry said, "he should like to go and have it off his mind, or he would neither be able to enjoy his talk with papa, nor to attend to his lessons for thinking of it. He knew he could not be too early for M. Candolle, as he had heard him tell mamma he rose between four and five in the summer mornings."

It was a good thing he had told Allen his good resolution the night before, for he found next morning when he awoke, as I daresay my little readers may have found sometimes too, that his resolution was much weaker, and the duty seemed much more difficult.

It would be impossible for him to be back in time to speak to papa, and it was quite right in him to wish *to speak to him*, because it was about something that

it would be useful for him to know. Then Monsieur was so stiff and formal, and he would think Mr Graham had *desired* him to apologise, and never know that he did it of his own accord.

All these and many other reasons made him almost resolve not to go. But Allen was too faithful a friend not to try every argument in his power to persuade him, and had at last the pleasure of seeing him set off on his little pony, in time to allow of his getting to M—— by six o'clock.

Harry found his task very nearly as disagreeable as he expected. Monsieur evidently thought that he would not have come if his father had not sent him, and besides he could not put much trust in his promises of amendment when he had so often deceived him. Harry, feeling conscious that he did not *intend* to deceive, and forgetting M. Candolle had no means of knowing this, felt very indignant, and found it difficult to keep his temper. When he returned home he found Mr Graham in his study alone.

"O papa! I have so much I want to say to you; but first of all do say that you will take back these terrible words, 'Harry is not worthy to be trusted;'" and as Harry said this, the tears stood in his eyes, and he looked at his papa, trembling with eagerness.

"*My dear Harry,*" said Mr Graham, "it does not

depend upon me; it depends on you alone, when I can unsay them."

"O papa! you do not, you cannot mean to say, that I would willingly break my promise," said Harry, in an indignant agitated tone. "Indeed, papa," he continued, his voice almost choked by the proud angry tears; "indeed, papa, I think it is very unjust in you to say so."

And turning away, he rested his forehead on the back of one of the high chairs, feeling himself deeply injured.

Mr Graham did not speak for some moments, and then he said very gravely,

"Harry, I cannot suffer you to speak to me in that tone. If you choose to command yourself a little, and hear what I have got to say, I shall be quite happy in turn to listen to your defence; but I can listen to nothing while you indulge in such impatience and pride."

Harry did not speak, and Mr Graham continued,

"I did not say, nor did I mean, that you would break a promise willingly; but indeed I cannot see how you can expect me or any one else to trust you to do anything you promise, when you are so exceedingly thoughtless, that after you have made the promise you never remember any more about it."

"*But, papa,*" said Harry, turning round and speak-

ing in a much more subdued manner, "does not my having had resolution enough to write that long difficult exercise last night when I was very tired, and my doing such a hard duty going to Monsieur's this morning, do these things not make you trust me more?"

"They make me trust, dear Harry, that just at the very moment when you have been convinced of a fault, you will do a great deal to repair it. For, I do confess, it was very difficult for an impatient proud boy like you to do both these things. But while I am glad to see, my boy, that you can even on one occasion force yourself to do what is very disagreeable and difficult, yet I should feel more confidence in you, did I see you, day after day, and hour after hour, exerting sufficient command over yourself, to do the duty of the day or hour, however irksome that duty may be, than to see you make one great effort on one great occasion, and then go on for days neglecting every-day duties, just for want of putting a little restraint upon your inclinations. These little opportunities of making ourselves do what is right occur many times every day; the great occasion will not perhaps offer itself once in two or three weeks."

"Then, papa," said Harry, in a very desponding tone, "will you never trust me again till I can make myself do all kinds of disagreeable things every day, and

till I can remember everything I ought to remember, and do everything I ought to do just at the right time?"

Mr Graham could not help smiling at Harry's dolorous tone, and he answered:

"I am afraid it will be long before you will attain to such perfection as that, Harry; but I think I may promise to trust you, when I see that you are more anxious to find out what is really right for you to do, than to discover what is agreeable. At present, dear boy, I think you must confess that you think far more of what you would like to do, than of what is right. And even when you are convinced that such a thing is your duty, and have determined to do it, you yet allow your mind to dwell so much on what is difficult and disagreeable in the performance of it, that you at last give it up altogether.

"I think, my own Harry, that if you try a little more to feel the full force of that verse we were speaking of the other day, 'None of us liveth to himself,' and if you every morning think of it, resolving that you will try to remember it through the whole day, and try to feel that the business of the day is not to seek how you can give yourself the most pleasure, but how you can best serve God and do good to others for His sake; then you will find yourself looking out more earnestly for opportunities *of serving God,* than for excuses for not doing what

you know to be right, but perhaps feel to be disagreeable. We often laugh at you for your ingenuity in making excuses for neglecting any duty; but I am always sorry when I have yielded to this inclination to laugh, for though your excuses are often very ludicrous in themselves, yet the fault in your character that leads you to make them is a very serious one, and one that must be remedied before you can be either a useful member of society, or, what is of far more consequence, a true Christian. It originates in your love of pleasure being stronger than your love of God, and while you can quiet your conscience or escape mamma's and my displeasure, you do not feel much anxiety about whether you have done wrong or not. Did you exert as much ingenuity in trying to find out what God wills you to do in any particular case, as you used in finding excuses for doing what *you* will, you would not so often do wrong. You will think of this, dear Harry, and see if what I say of your disposition be not true. And now you had better call the others, and we will discuss the important question of this grant of land, as we will have no opportunity of doing so during breakfast, from Mr Telfer being here."

"One question more, dear papa," said Harry, who had looked very grave while Mr Graham was speaking; "do *you not think* it was a little unfair in Monsieur to

speak as if he doubted me to-day, when I said I was sorry, and would be more careful for the future?"

"I cannot but think it is quite natural for him to feel such a doubt, Harry. What was the difference between the protestations of sorrow and promises of amendment you made to-day, and those you made last week?"

Harry hesitated: "Papa, I am afraid last week I only thought of quieting Monsieur, and of keeping him from complaining to you, and neither felt sorry, nor thought about what I was promising. While to-day, you know, dear papa, I was really very sorry, and very anxious to do right for the future."

"That is the *real* difference, but what was the *apparent* one?" Harry made no answer, and Mr Graham continued, "As there was no *apparent* difference, I think Monsieur was quite justified in doubting whether to-day's promise would be better kept than the last."

Harry could not but acknowledge the truth of this, and going for the other children, they were soon occupied with a very merry discussion about the property they wanted. It was most satisfactorily concluded by Mr Graham's giving them all they asked, upon condition of their giving him so many hours' labour every year. In addition to the open piece of ground, he said he would give them a small part of the plantation where there were a good many young trees, and they might

cut down some of them to build their house with. The only drawback to their pleasure was, that he did not wish them to begin any of their operations till he returned from London. He did not wish them to cut down the trees until he was present to give them proper directions how to proceed, as they might perhaps hurt themselves; and he was not sure how far it would be safe for them to work at their proposed garden until he had carefully examined the face of the rock, to see that there were no loose fragments that might fall on them. This was certainly a disappointment; but as Mr Graham was not to be much more than a fortnight absent, they made up their minds to wait patiently.

CHAPTER II.

AN ACCIDENT.

"THERE is a letter from papa," cried Harry, as he and Allen ran into the dining-room one morning before breakfast; "what does he say? when is he coming home? are our cousins coming?"

"I will tell you when I know myself," said Mrs Graham, laughing, "which I am not likely to do for some time if you chatter so much; it will be a good plan for you to go to the garden for the girls, and that will give me a little quiet time to read my letter."

The news that there was a letter from papa soon brought all the children to the dining-room. They were particularly anxious to hear this letter, as Mr Graham had said in a former one that their Uncle Percy was very anxious about the delicate health of his boy and girl; and as he had little prospect of being able to leave London *himself*, Mr Graham wished to persuade him

to trust them to him. This letter would tell whether they were to come or not.

Mrs Graham had finished her letter, and was ready to answer the eager questions of the impatient little party.

"Your cousins are coming, and papa thinks they will most probably start, so as to be in Edinburgh all Sunday, and arrive here on Monday night. Papa says he will leave us to judge for ourselves about their characters, and only mentions that Alice is delicate, timid, and a little shy; and that Douglas is a very clever boy. Douglas is much stronger than Alice, and papa thinks that the fact of many of his brothers having died when they were about his age, makes uncle more anxious than there is any cause to be. Alice has been little at home since her mother's death, and papa thinks that the aunt she has been living with has been rather too harsh to her. So we must be all very kind, and try to give her a little more confidence in herself. There is a letter from Mrs Lindsey, inviting you four older ones to spend to-morrow with her children, to stay all night, and return before breakfast on Saturday. But as she says Willie has certainly got the hooping-cough, Allen and Eleanor must go alone."

The children could scarcely eat breakfast, they were so much engaged talking about their cousins' visit, what they would do to amuse them, and how much there was

to do before they came. The kite must be mended, a new shuttle-cock made, the play-room put in order, and, above all, the garden must be weeded, the gravel walks newly rolled, and everything done to make it look as beautiful as possible.

This day, however, turned out very rainy, nothing could be done in the garden, and the children were obliged to content themselves with getting all their playthings arranged and repaired, painting some neat new tallies for some of their flowers, and such quiet in-door occupations. The clouds cleared away gradually in the course of the evening, and before the children went to bed, they had the pleasure of seeing a most beautiful clear moon.

"Harry, you and Marion must be very busy to-morrow," said Allen, as they were going up-stairs to bed; "for you know we cannot count on getting much done on Saturday, as we are engaged to go to Woodfield for Eleanor's bantams and my plants of the double violet."

"Yes," said Harry; "and the bed is not prepared for the violets yet. I wish you were not going, we will be so dull without you."

"So you will, poor Harry, you and Marion are so very quiet, there will be no noise in the house at all to-morrow."

They all laughed at the demure grave way in which Eleanor said this, as Harry and Marion were well known to be the most noisy members of the family.

The next day was a very beautiful one, and after lessons, Harry, Marion, Georgie, and even little Lewis, worked very industriously in the garden. As they had not quite finished all they wished to do before dinner, and the evening was mild, Mrs Graham allowed them to go out and work again after tea, while she took out a book and sat on the seat at the top of their little garden, now reading and now watching the progress of the little work-people, and listening to their merry talk.

Little Gracie and Lewis had been gone to bed for some time, and Mrs Graham was beginning to feel the evening air a little chill, but still the gardeners showed no signs of fatigue.

"You had better go and take a walk up the river side, mamma," said Harry; "it is getting too cold for you to sit still, and we will join you very soon."

"And be quite ready to listen to a nice story, mamma," added Marion, laughing.

It was a beautiful spring evening, everything looking fresh and bright. The sun had set, but there was still a warm light thrown upon the trees and grass from the deep red clouds near where it had gone down. Harry had a great turn for drawing, and as he stopped

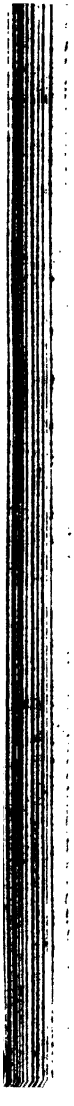
half-way up the garden to rest himself from the fatigue of wheeling the last barrowful of weeds up the gravel walk, and to defend himself from Marion's laughing accusation of stupidity in having made the rubbish corner at the top instead of the bottom of the garden, his eye was greatly pleased with the quiet beauty of the scene, and he called Marion and Georgie to come and admire it with him.

"The lawn is so pretty just now, with the bright fresh green of the planes and beeches, contrasting with the bare branches of the ashes and oaks, and the dull dark green of the Scotch firs."

"And does not little Maggie look quite picturesque, coming down with her cloak and her pail," said Marion, pointing to a little girl who was coming from the house towards the bridge a little higher up the river than the garden. "She is very naughty though," she continued, as she saw the child climb up the low wall of the bridge; "papa has so often warned all the children that it is very dangerous."

Just as she said these words, some sudden noise startled little Maggie; she lost her balance and fell into the water. Marion screamed and covered her eyes with her hands; but Harry, telling little Georgie where to go for help, began himself to run down the banks of the river, clearing the low hedge of their garden at a leap.

Farther down, at a part of the river where the banks were higher and steeper, there was an old willow-tree, which grew for a good way nearly horizontally out from the bank. The boys called it their pier; for they often threw baskets or little boats into the water from the bridge, ran down the banks to this tree, crept along the trunk, and swung themselves down to a flat smooth rock, below the part of the tree where it began to grow upwards again, and so caught their boats as the current was carrying them past the rock. Harry at once recollected this, and thought that if he could reach it in time, he might be able to save the little girl. Starting from the bridge, if they ran fast, they were in time to catch their boats, and as Harry had started from a point farther down, and also, from his anxiety, ran very much faster than usual, he was on the rock a few seconds before the child's body was carried down. He knelt on the spot where he knew by experience the current would bring her nearest to the rock, and tried to keep himself calm and collected as he saw her coming towards him. He succeeded in catching hold of part of her dress, and drew her slowly and carefully on dry land. Although she had not been long in the water, she was quite insensible, and Harry's next difficulty was how to get her carried to the bank. He knew *that no time* should be lost in using means for her re





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covery, and he looked anxiously around to see if any one was coming to his assistance. As he saw no one near him, he determined to try to swing himself on to the tree with one arm, holding her with the other. But it was quite impossible for him to do this, Maggie was so heavy, from her clothes being wet and from her being insensible, that, after spraining his arm severely in the attempt, he was obliged to give it up and lay her down again on the rock. He now began to feel very uneasy; the banks were so high at this place that he feared the people who were coming to help him might pass without seeing him, and being faint from the pain of his arm, he felt that the water rushing past him was making him giddy. He knew that it would only make him more so to think about it, and he tried to turn his thoughts to the care and protection of his heavenly Father, and to fix his eyes on the bank that he might not see the rushing waters. The first person who came to them was Mrs Graham, who had heard from Marion what had happened. She was not able to be of much use, as Harry could not with his sprained arm lift Maggie high enough for Mrs Graham to get hold of her; but her being there to attract the attention of any one who came to his assistance insured their not passing him unobserved. In a few minutes they heard the voices of *people coming* down both banks of the river, and pre-

sently several labourers made their appearance. Little Maggie was soon carried safely to the bank.

Harry would willingly have concealed from his mamma that he had hurt his arm, but he was so faint from the pain that he was nearly as helpless as Maggie, and had to submit to be lifted upon the tree and carried to the bank as she had been.

Mrs Graham desired Marion (who with Georgie had by this time joined them) to run to the house and tell the housekeeper of the accident, that she might have warm blankets ready to lay the little girl in. But when Marion saw Harry's pale face and closed eyes, she began to cry, and tormented Mrs Graham with questions as to what had happened to him. Georgie acted more sensibly, for, though a good deal frightened about Harry, he ran off as fast as his little tired legs could carry him; taking care, too, to deliver his message as quietly as possible, so that Mrs Whyte, the housekeeper, might not get flurried and confused. Through the whole of this eventful evening there was a great contrast between his behaviour and Marion's. Both were equally anxious to be of use, but Georgie showed much more sense in his efforts than Marion did. When little Maggie had been laid upon Mrs Whyte's bed, and every one was busy using the various means for her recovery, Marion was in everybody's way, never thinking of doing anything, or

going to fetch anything till she saw some one else going to do it, and then starting forward and hindering more efficient persons from being of use. She was so troublesome, too, with her constant questions, "What can I do? can I be of any use, mamma?" that at last Mrs Graham desired her to go out of the room altogether.

Georgie, in the meantime, had accompanied Harry into an inner room, where Mrs Graham wished him to rest on the sofa; he helped him to get off his wet clothes, and did everything he required so nicely and quietly, that Harry laughingly declared it was worth while having a disabled arm to be so well waited on. Then when he had made Harry as comfortable as he could, he went quietly into the other room, remaining quite still in a corner out of everybody's way, until he saw that there was something for him to do, and then doing it so quietly, and with so little bustle, that no one seemed to know he was in the room.

After some time had been spent in trying to bring the little girl to life again, she at last opened her eyes and looked round. Georgie ran away to tell Harry and Marion the joyful news, and that mamma had said she had now no fear of her recovery. A messenger was then sent up to tell her poor old grandmother, with whom she lived, what had happened, and to ask her to come

down to sleep at Karnford, as it would not be good for Maggie to go home till next morning.

The doctor had been sent for as soon as Georgie had come to the house with the news of the accident, but by the time he arrived the little girl was in a sound sleep, and except that she looked a little pale, she was quite as well as if nothing had happened. Poor Harry had lain still all this time on the sofa, without uttering a single complaint, and when the doctor examined his arm he gave him great praise for his fortitude, for he said it was severely sprained, and must have given him great pain. Leeches were applied, and Harry found the little teasing pain they gave him much worse to bear than the far more serious one of the sprain. Indeed, he told Allen afterwards, that he did not think he could have borne it patiently: if it had not been that mamma looked so pale and wearied, he would have been sorry to let her know how much he suffered.

You can all imagine how much talking and how many questions there would be next morning when Allen and Eleanor heard the story. Harry was asked many times over, "If he felt much afraid while standing in the water?" "How happy he must have been when he heard that Maggie had opened her eyes!" "But how," asked Allen, "did you remember the willow-tree, or *think of such* a clever plan so immediately?"

"That," said Mrs Graham, "gives me more pleasure than any other thing. I rejoice so much to think that my little thoughtless Harry should have been able to collect his senses at such a moment, and to decide at once what it was necessary to do."

"Well, mamma," said Harry, laughing, "you have all the merit of it."

"Indeed, Harry! I am glad to hear it; though I scarcely understand how that can be, as I was not near you at the time."

"Oh! I mean that you have all the merit of my being able to think in a hurry. Do you remember a long talk you and I had one day about heroes? I asked you what qualities I required to make me a hero; and you said one quality I was very deficient in was presence of mind; and, then, you know, when I said I did not understand how I could get it when I had it not, you told me that I must try on every occasion to keep myself quiet and calm, and that though I might see little improvement for some time, yet I must persevere, and I should gradually acquire the habit. You said that it was not only on great occasions that I required presence of mind, but in quite little things; that I was in such a bustle whenever there was anything to be done in a hurry, that I always took the wrong way, and did more harm than good. I remember, mamma,

you made me laugh by reminding me, how one night, in my haste to save old Mrs Lindsey the trouble of rising to set down her tea-cup, I jumped up so suddenly that I upset the whole tea-tray, and spoiled several of the ladies' gowns, besides being the cause of poor old Ponto's getting severely scalded by the tea-urn falling on him. You advised me, whenever I was in a hurry to do anything, to pause a moment to think how it might be best done, and said I should save time in the end by that instead of losing it. So, mamma, ever since then I have been very careful, and do you know, mamma, I think *I can think* much *faster* now."

All the children laughed at Harry's odd expression, and Mrs Graham said she was glad to see her words had made so much impression on his mind.

There was some difficulty in settling the plans for the day. They had promised to go to Woodfield, a farm a good distance from Karnford, on the other side of the hill, but Mrs Graham was unwilling to allow Harry to go, for fear of hurting his arm. The others did not wish to go without him, and they therefore agreed most willingly to Mrs Graham's proposal, that they should write a note to the farmer's wife to tell her why they had not kept their engagement, and to say that if they were all well they would go the next Saturday. *Mrs Graham* undertook to send the note for them,

as she was going to send a messenger in that direction at any rate.

"What a good clever mamma you are," said Eleanor, laughing, as she prepared to write the note; "I think you have learned, like Harry, 'to think very fast.'"

After sending away the messenger, the little party and Mrs Graham went down to the river side, to view the scene of last night's adventures, and to point out the very spot where Marion and Harry were standing when they saw Maggie fall—where Harry fell down on the grass, and all those little particulars that every one likes to hear when any uncommon event has happened.

Marion was the only silent member of the party, for she felt much ashamed at the remembrance of her want of self-command; and though her mamma had said nothing to her about it, she was conscious that she had behaved very foolishly.

"I think," said Eleanor, "it would be a good plan for papa to put broken glass along the top of the wall, to prevent the children going on it again."

"Yes," said Allen, "but, do you not think we might do something to-day to prevent them? Papa cannot give orders about it till Tuesday, and perhaps some children who have not heard of Maggie's fall may be *running* on it to-day. I have seen iron spikes

put along walls; if we had something of that kind, it would keep the children off."

"But we cannot make iron spikes, Allen."

"No, but we might make little bits of wooden paling, and put them across the top of the wall, here and there."

"We could easily make the pieces of paling," Harry said, "but how could we fasten them to the wall?"

Allen considered for a minute or two, and then said, that he thought they might be able to manage it, by fastening one end of each little piece of paling to a strong stake, which they might drive into the ground beside the wall, so as to let the paling rest on the top of the wall.

Mrs Graham approved of their plan very much, but she advised them to make their paling of rough branches, and not to waste their little store of good planks on what was only intended for a temporary thing. She said, too, that she would desire the gardener to come and make the holes to drive the stakes into, as the ground was so hard that they could not do it themselves. This business occupied them so well all day, that they had no time to feel impatient for Monday. Monday evening came at last, but the mail arrived so late at night that the children were obliged, though very unwillingly, to go to bed, and leave their mamma

to receive the travellers alone. Mrs Graham felt nearly as much anxiety to see her little nephew and niece as the children did. From some expressions in the letter she had received that morning from her husband, she saw that he thought Douglas had been too much indulged, and was rather haughty and overbearing; and she felt a little afraid of her own Harry's hot proud temper.

About ten o'clock the travellers arrived—the children very tired, so that Mrs Graham had little opportunity of judging of their characters, as they went to bed immediately after supper.

Alice was delicate, timid, gentle-looking, and at first seemed half afraid of her new aunt, though, after a little, Mrs Graham's kindness of manner reassured her. Douglas, on the contrary, was very frank, with a good deal of self-confidence in his manner. He was a very handsome boy, with a fine open expression, and a bright sunny smile that gave a peculiar charm to his countenance.

After they had gone to bed, Mrs Graham asked her husband with some anxiety, what he thought of their new inmates, and how they would get on with their own children.

Mr Graham answered that Alice was a gentle-tempered, affectionate girl, whom any one who only took

the trouble of gaining her affections might lead. Douglas was a fine boy, open, manly, generous, but certainly had too high an opinion of himself.

Mr Graham then heard with deep interest the story of the accident, expressing his fervent gratitude, both for Harry's preservation, and for his having been made the means of saving the life of another. He was also much pleased to hear that all the time of his absence, Harry had been much more patient, gentle, and attentive to his duties.

Douglas rose the next morning as soon as he awoke, eager to see everything that could be seen; and so beautiful was the view from his windows, that he could scarcely dress, he so often stopped to look out at everything around. Just when he was ready to leave the room, he heard the sound of merry children's voices under his window, and looking out, he saw all his cousins on the lawn with his uncle, who was amusing little Gracie, by imitating the uncouth motions of some wild beasts he had seen in London. Douglas soon joined them, and was introduced to his cousins. There was a good deal of shyness at first, but it soon wore off, and by the time they were summoned to prayers, he had heard about their garden, rabbits, and the house they were going to build.

"What do you think of your new cousin, girls?"

asked Mr Graham, as they lingered a minute after the boys.

"I like him, papa," said Marion, "he looks so merry and full of fun."

"And I like him," said Eleanor, "because he was so kind and gentle to little Gracie, although he looks so clever."

Alice, in the meantime, slept on, till her curtains were gently drawn aside, and opening her eyes, she saw Eleanor's bright happy face, looking at her with so much kindness, that she quite forgot all her shyness, and kissing her, asked, "Are you Eleanor or Marion?"

"Eleanor; and I have brought up your breakfast, as mamma wishes you to take it before you rise." And then Eleanor fastened back the curtains of the bed, drew up the blind, that Alice might see what a bright day it was to welcome her, and did everything to make her comfortable, so nicely and kindly, that Alice felt she loved her already, and that she had been very foolish to feel so much afraid of coming among her new cousins; she was sure now that she should be happy with them. She continued to be of the same opinion that night when she went to bed, though she had sometimes through the day felt a little afraid of the boys, they seemed to be so strong and merry. She feared that, when the first politeness to the strangers had worn

off, she should find them too boisterous playfellows, and that they would laugh at her fears; for Alice was really very timid, and having never been in the country, except for a few days at a time, she felt afraid of many things that the little Grahams were quite accustomed to.

Douglas was also much pleased with his cousins, his uncle and aunt, Karnford, and everything about him. His cousins were so merry, and had so many occupations and amusements, it would be impossible ever to weary; and then every one was so kind to Alice; and as his tender watchful affection for her was one of the brightest features in his character, he felt very grateful to them all for their kindness to her.

This day had been one of complete idleness, but they were to begin their lessons as usual again next day, as Mr Graham said he was sure his strong children would soon tire the little Londoners if they had any more days of idleness.

Douglas at once agreed to Allen's proposition,—that they should delay beginning the house-building, until Harry's arm was strong enough to allow of his joining them; but they had plenty of amusement without it, everything was so new to Alice and Douglas.

CHAPTER III.

THE EXCURSION.

"SHOULD you like to take a walk with me to-day, Harry?" said Mr Graham, the Friday morning after his return home; "I do not think you can be of much use in either the garden or workshop."

"O papa, I should like it so much," was Harry's eager answer; "I wish so very much to have a quiet sensible talk with you."

"Well, collect all your sense, and we will set off immediately after luncheon, as I wish to go as far as the young plantation at the top of the hill."

After lessons and luncheon, accordingly, while the other children went to complete some alterations they were making in the garden, Harry and his papa started for a long walk.

"Well, Harry," said Mr Graham, "mamma tells me *you have been* much more attentive to all you ought to

do, and much less impatient, since the memorable Mr Telfer day. Have you been trying to follow the advice I gave you that morning I went to London?"

"O papa, that is one of the things I wish to speak to you about. Indeed, papa, I do not think I shall ever be what you call a useful member of society, if I must learn to do things merely because they are right."

"Why, Harry," said Mr Graham, smiling, "I should not have expected to hear you speak so despondingly just when you have really been succeeding in your endeavours."

"Oh! I know," said Harry, "that I have struggled very hard indeed sometimes, and have often succeeded in keeping down my impatience, and in doing a great many things I would rather not do; but then——" Harry hesitated. "Papa, I am afraid you will think me wrong if I say what I was going to say."

"I may think it wrong for you to feel it, Harry, but I cannot think your saying it will make it more wrong."

"Well, papa, I was only going to say, that it takes away all my pleasure and happiness to think that I must go on day after day struggling against my temper, and doing so many difficult duties. Yesterday, Douglas and I were arguing about something, and I knew I was right, and besides, I was very much provoked by his haughty, decided way of saying that I was wrong. However, I

managed to keep silent, and I went quite away from Douglas, that I might not be tempted to speak crossly. But then, papa, it gave me such a sore feeling at my heart, to go away as if I were wrong, when I knew I was right; and to hear all his provoking words without saying anything, that I just felt as if I never could be happy, if I were always obliged to go on doing such disagreeable hard duties."

"My dear Harry," said Mr Graham, "all you have said only proves the truth of what I told you, that all your ideas of happiness consist in being able to please yourself, and to have your own will. Do you think you can remember what thoughts passed through your mind yesterday? What made you do right when you felt so much inclined to do wrong? Try if you can remember, and we will not speak any more for a few minutes."

After a little pause, Harry said, "Papa, I think it was because I knew you would be vexed if I quarrelled with Douglas. I am sure that was it, because I remember at the time I was feeling it so difficult and disagreeable, the thought that you would never know I had done it seemed the hardest part of it."

"Well, my dear boy, does not that help you to understand what I said to you the other night, that I should *have more confidence* in you, if I could see you acting

from a sense of duty, and not merely from your love for mamma, for me, or for any one you love very dearly. God has given you a very warm heart, my Harry, and you love us so tenderly, that it is difficult for you to do anything to vex us, and easy for you, in general, to do anything to please us. It is quite right you should feel this, but you can see by the instance you have given me, that this nature is not in itself sufficient to enable you to do right. As you grow up you may be removed to a distance from us, and if affection is the cause of all your actions, your affections may be gained by unworthy friends, who may make use of your love for them to mislead you. More than that, there is a very solemn question you should ask yourself, Do you think your heavenly Father can be satisfied to see you waste all the warm, deep affections He has blessed you with upon mere earthly objects, however worthy they may be? and does not your conduct in this respect amount to saying, 'You have blessed me with an affectionate heart, and you have further given me the very great blessing of kind, good friends; *therefore*, I will love them so well that I shall have no affection to spare you, who have thus blessed me.'"

"O papa," said Harry, "I never could say or feel that. Indeed, I *do* love God, and feel grateful to Him for all these things."

"My dear boy," said Mr Graham, in a kind but very solemn tone, "I am very sorry to give you so much pain. I know that when we talk about the goodness and love of God in all He has done for us, you often feel much moved; but, dear Harry, if you loved God as you do me, the desire of pleasing Him, and of doing His commandments, would influence you, instead of your being only acted on by a fear of vexing me, or a desire to please me. Perhaps you think I am treating this subject too seriously; but, my dear boy, when I remember all the love that Christ has shown to us, a love so far surpassing anything I can feel for you, a love that brought Him to suffer and die for such cold, ungrateful creatures as we are; do you not think it must grieve my very heart to see how much more you love me than you do Him, and that while you would do almost anything to please me, you yet will do scarcely anything for His sake? The very warmth of your love to me, Harry, makes me see the more sin in your want of love to Him."

Mr Graham spoke very earnestly, and Harry's eyes filled with tears. They walked on for some time in silence; at last Harry said in a low voice, "Papa, you think that it is my want of love to God that makes me feel so unwilling to go on doing disagreeable *duties?*"

"I do not mean, my dear Harry, that even if you loved God more, you would always find it easy to do disagreeable duties. But were you so to see God's great love to you in sending His Son to die for you, and the tenderness of that Saviour's love in watching over and caring for you, as that your heart should glow with love to Him in return; then in such a case as that of yesterday you would feel a sweet satisfaction in knowing that God saw all your difficulties and all your efforts to please Him. Another thing that in this case would make your duty easier, would be this, that when you are trying to do right for God's sake, that leads you to seek help from Him in prayer, and you know, Harry, if you seek you will find. Now," continued Mr Graham, "I am going into this house on business; if you like to sit down here and think over what I have been saying, when I come back we will consult about your plans for to-morrow."

The point upon which Mr Graham wished to consult Harry was, how they were to get Alice conveyed to Woodfield next day. The little Grahams and Douglas could walk, but it was much too far for Alice. Harry suggested that they might take one of the ponies with them for Alice to ride.

Mr Graham said he had thought of that, but that Alice was so timid he feared she might not like it.

"But," he said, "do you not think it would be a good plan for M'Pherson to go with you? I do not think even Alice could be afraid if she had him to lead her pony."

"O papa!" cried Harry, his eyes sparkling with joy, "that would be very delightful, we do like M'Pherson so very much to go with us on any excursion."

"Well," said Mr Graham, smiling, "if we make haste home, you will perhaps have time to run round by the farm-yard and bid him come to the house on his way home."

M'Pherson was a sort of upper farm-servant, who superintended the labourers on a small farm Mr Graham managed himself. The children were all very fond of him, he was so good-natured, and had so many stories to tell them of strange things he had seen in foreign lands, for he had been a soldier. He was a very good man, and much better educated than most people of his class, so that Mr and Mrs Graham were quite sure the children could learn no harm from him.

"M'Pherson is here, papa," said Allen, as he came into the drawing-room to tea; "shall I ask him to come in?"

"Yes, and we shall hear if he is willing to undertake the charge of such a boisterous party."

M'Pherson was quite as fond of the children as they

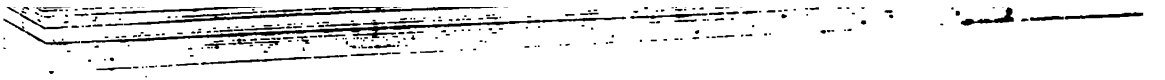
were of him, and quite willing, if his master could spare him, to go with them anywhere. He proposed, as an improvement in the plan, that, instead of the pony, they should take the little cart, and old Jenny the donkey. "The cart," he said, "would be of use in bringing home the bantams and the plants; and, perhaps, sir," he continued, "as I am with them at any rate, you might allow us to come home by the glen, and we can get some roots of the large primrose the young ladies are so anxious to have."

"O papa, O mamma, if we *might* do that," cried several voices. Mr Graham was quite willing to consent, but he thought it might be too far for Alice to go even in the cart, too far also for poor old Jenny, particularly as Eleanor, Marion, and Douglas would be obliged to go part of the way in the cart, if they lengthened the walk so much.

M'Pherson said, they need not take Miss Alice or old Jenny all the way to Woodfield, they might stop at the mill to rest, while the others went on. There was a very good cart road, he said, from the mill to the glen, and they could come home by the river side, where the road was level, so that Jenny would have no hill when she was getting tired. If Mrs Graham allowed them, they might take their dinner with them and eat it in the glen, and that would give Jenny a long rest, and



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he would take care to provide a good dinner for her too.

"O M'Pherson, you are the very best and cleverest of all old men," cried Eleanor, "I am sure, papa, you are going to say yes, and mamma too,—see, she is smiling."

"Well," replied Mr Graham, "I suppose we must say yes; so M'Pherson, you may give orders for the cart to be ready. Perhaps mamma and I may go to the glen to meet you, and take Gracie with us."

"Then you mean Lewis to go with us, papa?"

"Yes, I think if you have the cart, and M'Pherson to take care of him, he may go."

"Oh! thank you, thank you, papa," cried the little boy; "and thank you too, good kind M'Pherson."

"Good-night, and thank you, good kind M'Pherson," cried all the others.

The next morning was very fine, and by prayer-time the little girls had packed up all the provisions for dinner, cold meat, bread and cheese, to which Mrs Whyte added a large pie which she had baked for them the night before, as soon as she heard of their plans from M'Pherson. The boys had got their spades, baskets, jumping-poles, and everything necessary for a whole day spent in the open air. It would be difficult to imagine a merrier party. Mr Graham went across the river with them,

and as far as the gate into the children's garden, where he left them, giving them strict injunctions to obey M'Pherson in everything, and to give him as little trouble as possible.

"Remember, M'Pherson, I put them all under your command, and you must keep them in good order."

He had advised all the girls to go up the hill in the cart, as they had such a long day's walk before them, and they therefore moved slowly, not to distress poor old Jenny. The road was not very steep, as it wound backwards and forwards, and Jenny walked on very gravely, as if she did not think her load at all too heavy. The boys sometimes walked beside the cart talking to the girls, sometimes made excursions into the wood to see the squirrels and rabbits that were playing on every side, and the whole party were in great glee, and talked a good deal of nonsense.

"How beautifully the birds are singing," observed Alice, when a moment's silence had permitted her to hear them.

"Yes," replied Eleanor, "but the place to hear the blackbirds is at the mill. They always seem to me to sing louder there, as if they were trying to drown the sound of the waterfall. Perhaps it may be because by the time we get there, we are generally tired enough to

be contented to sit quietly under the trees and listen to them.

"Oh, for shame, Eleanor," said Allen, "to take away the renown of the mill as being the blackbirds' music-room. Fly away, bird," he continued, addressing one of the little singers, "fly away to the mill, and tell your brothers and sisters, uncles, aunts, and cousins, to prepare their very best songs; for a young lady is coming who never yet heard a blackbird concert in perfection."

"Brothers and uncles, if you please, Allen, but hardly sisters and aunts; as you told me yesterday, that it is the male bird alone who sings."

"Well, Alice, as you remember my lessons so well, tell me what is the name of that impudent-looking bird with the blue head, which is hopping before us, flying off every now and then, then alighting on the road, as if it wished to provoke us to try to catch it."

"It is a tomtit, is it not, Allen? I always confound it with the chaffinch, though they are not at all alike."

"Have you ever seen a chaffinch's nest, Miss Alice?" asked M'Pherson.

"Yes, Harry showed me one yesterday, and a wren's too; they are both so neat, one almost wishes to be a bird, to have such a pretty little home. But, Allen, as you are my bird-master, tell me what bird makes that

melancholy sweet sound, a little like the sound your pigeons make, but sweeter and sadder."

"It is a wood-pigeon. But, Alice, if you saw its nest you would not wish to be a wood-pigeon at any rate. It only lays a few sticks together, making a sort of rude floor on the fork of two branches, and does not take the trouble of building either walls or roof."

"The wren's nest had a roof, but not the chaffinch's."

"No, Miss Alice," said M'Pherson; "few birds make roofs, though some have very odd walls, as Master Allen calls them."

"O M'Pherson, tell them about the birds in India," cried Harry. "The tailor-bird, Alice, makes its nest by sewing a dead leaf to a living one; its beak is its needle, and the strong fibres of the leaves its thread. And the Cape tit makes a nest like a bottle, and there is a little pouch on the outside for the male bird while the hen is on her eggs."

"Nonsense, Harry," said Douglas, laughing. "You are trying how much our ignorance can make us believe."

"No, Master Douglas, I assure you it is quite true; but if I can find a wasp's nest to show you, and you see the fine paper they make of wood, you will believe about the tailor-bird."

"Paper made of wood, and made by wasps! O M'Pherson, I know a little too well, and have read a little too much to believe that," said Douglas, contemptuously.

"Very well, sir; I shall try to find one some day to show you. In the meantime, can you tell me what makes that curious red spot in this lime-tree leaf?"

Douglas looked at it, and tried in vain to find some learned reason. He saw the little Grahams knew, and were enjoying his puzzle as a punishment for his doubting their information.

"I suppose," he said at last, rather pompously, "it must be discoloured by something falling on it. Perhaps some peculiar juice might have the effect."

"Very good, sir; I suppose it cannot possibly be caused by a caterpillar?"

"No," said Douglas; "I am sure there is no sign of any caterpillar here."

M'Pherson made a small hole with his nail in the raised part of the spot, uncovered a little bit, and showed Douglas a tiny worm.

"Now, you see, Douglas," cried Harry, rather too exultingly, "you were wrong; even Lewis knew that it was caused by a caterpillar."

"Oh, of course," said Douglas; "you ought to know these common country matters better than I can do."

Harry felt much tempted to ask him, why he doubted their information so much, if he thought they knew better than he did; but Alice asking M'Pherson if there were any other kind of caterpillars' nests, fortunately gave him time to remember it would only irritate Douglas. M'Pherson told Alice that there are many varieties of leaf-running caterpillars, and he said that later in summer they would see very pretty gall-berries on the oaks, from the same cause.

"But they are not nests for the caterpillars to bring out their young ones in," said Eleanor, "as the birds do in theirs, but clever little hiding-places where they can feed at their leisure secure from their enemies."

Alice laughingly declared, that was not nearly so interesting as the birds building nests for their little ones.

They had been so much amused that Alice had never thought of being frightened, even in the steep places, but they were now near the mill, and when she saw the steep stony bank they must go up, she was afraid, and insisted on getting out to walk. The mill stood on a little level piece of ground, on a sort of sunny knoll, standing out from the wood, and there was a pretty fall of water behind it. It was not now used as a mill, and indeed it was so difficult to get at it, from the steepness of the hill, both above and below, that it was not

easy to understand how it had ever been used for one. The road our party were going to take to the glen was the only tolerable one that led to it. Alice was to remain here to rest, and both Eleanor and Marion proposed remaining with her; but the other children said Mrs West would be so much disappointed if Eleanor did not go to get her bantams herself, that it was settled she should accompany the boys.

The mill was quite in ruins, and Marion led Alice to a pretty shady seat near the waterfall, where from the trees behind them the little girls heard the birds, as Eleanor had said, apparently trying to drown the noise of the water.

"How happy you must be here, Marion," said Alice, after they had sat for some minutes in silence; "uncle and aunt are so kind, then the place is so pretty, your nice gardens and that delightful wood. Are not you always happy?"

"Not always," said Marion, laughing; "though I daresay we are so generally. But sometimes, you know, there come wrong days, and then we cannot be happy."

"What do you call wrong days, Marion?"

"Oh, just days when everything happens quite differently from what you wish. When all your lessons seem *so difficult* that you feel sure you can never

learn them; and when everything you have to do just the thing you dislike most to do."

Alice laughed at Marion's description, and aske what caused these wrong days?

Marion had asked her mamma one day, and mamma thought that this feeling that everything was going wrong might be often caused by one's not being quite well, although not ill enough to be kept indoors, or even to be able to say exactly what was the matter, but just enough to make one feel uncomfortable and cross. "But mamma said," continued Marion, "that that was no reason why I should go on being discontented, idle, and cross all day; because if I struggled hard to get the better of the feeling, I should be quite able to do it."

"But how would you *begin* to struggle?" asked Alice; "that always seems so difficult to me, when I really want to get the better of a bad habit. When aunt spoke to me so kindly about my indolence, I thought I would do everything in my power to get the better of it. But yet somehow I never can get a beginning to my trying."

"Oh, you know, Alice," said Marion, in a serious tone, "we cannot do any of these things right unless we ask God to help us. But then mamma says that *while we should* always feel that we can do nothing with-

out Him, we should make use of any *little* thing that can help us. She told me of a plan for trying to *begin* to get the better of my discontented feeling, and if you ask her I am sure she will be able to give you some nice plan for making a beginning in conquering your indolence."

"What was the plan aunt gave you? Did you find it a good one?"

"She advised me on these wrong days, when I feel as if nothing can please me, to give up altogether thinking about being pleased myself, and to try to do something that will gratify some other person. I tried it one day, and did what I disliked very much indeed, I finished some work for Eleanor, which I knew she was anxious to get done."

"And did it make you more happy?"

"Yes; I was so much pleased thinking about Eleanor's gratification when she found it was finished, that it made me quite happy again. And then when I had forced myself to do such a tiresome thing, everything else seemed so much nicer to do than it had been, that I felt quite contented."

"I do not think, Marion," said Alice, "that you have had any wrong days since we came."

"No," said Marion, "too many good things have *been happening* to allow wrong-day feelings to come

in. There was Harry's famous plan of our house, and our dear little rabbits coming the same day; then we were so glad about your coming, and that has turned out even a happier thing than we expected. For we all like you and Douglas very much, you are so kind and gentle, and Douglas is so merry, and besides, you are both so pleased with everything we do for you."

"Indeed," said Alice, laughing, "I think it would be difficult not to be pleased, you are all so kind, and there are so many delightful things to see and do."

"Oh, but," replied Marion, "I know the Lindseys have a cousin, who, when she comes to see them, is always discontented. If they take a long walk she is tired, and the day is hot; and if they stay at home and try to amuse her in the garden, then it is *so* tiresome to be wandering about all day, with no settled thing to do. She is sure to make difficulties in every plan any one proposes, and to think something else would be better. Allen says," continued Marion, laughing, "that if you were to show her a beautiful plant in full leaf and covered with flowers, but with one withered leaf, she would say, 'How ugly that dead leaf is.'"

"Eleanor is very different from that," said Alice, "she always tries to help on every one's plan, even though she has one of her own, and whatever we are

doing she finds some happy good thing in it. Has she ever what you call wrong days, Marion?"

"No," said Marion. "I do not mean that she never does wrong, but she never goes on from bad to worse for a whole day, as I do; and she very seldom has that discontented, peevish feeling, as if everything were going wrong. As you say, Alice, she finds something good in everything that happens. I once asked mamma what she thought was the cause of Eleanor's being so happy and contented; and she says one cause is, that Eleanor never thinks much about herself. Mamma says, our happiest days are, generally, not those in which we have had a great deal of pleasure, but those in which we have been able to be kind and unselfish, and to make others happy."

"There is something about Eleanor," said Alice, "that looks as if she managed to find the right way of doing everything. On Thursday, when those ladies were here, while I felt awkward and shy, and you, Marion, fidgeted about, and hesitated and blushed when you were speaking to them, Eleanor looked so quiet and modest, and spoke so prettily and easily, that I felt inclined to envy her."

"That is another case in which mamma says Eleanor's not thinking of herself is of use to her. She says *Eleanor only thinks* of what the ladies are saying to her,

and what is the true right answer to their questions, and so she does not feel awkward or shy; while I am thinking that the ladies will think me silly if I blush and hesitate, and that makes me do it still more. But about these wrong days, Alice," continued Marion, thoughtfully, "one thing that keeps both Allen and Eleanor from doing many wrong things, and makes them very different from Harry and me, must be, I think, because they love God more than we do, and like more to think of Him, and to remember that He sees them always. I *know* that God sees me, but Eleanor remembers it, and feels more as if all these things were *real* than I do, and I think that makes her much more careful not to do wrong."

Alice was silent and thoughtful for a few minutes, and then she said, "I can understand, Marion, how the loving God would keep Eleanor from *great* faults, but I think such a little thing as speaking crossly when any one teases us seems too small for God to care about."

"Oh no, Alice," said Marion, "I am sure you are wrong there; papa said one day that there was nothing too *little* to do for God's sake."

"I know very little about these things," said Alice, sighing, "but when you said a little while ago that we *must ask* God to help us to do right in such small things

as your getting the better of your discontented feeling, or my overcoming my indolence, it seemed to me as if it would be wrong for me to go to such a great God for such a trifle."

"O Alice," replied Marion, "I know that is wrong, but you must ask mamma or papa about it, for I do not know how to tell you properly. Eleanor could tell you better than I can, for indeed both she and Allen love God very much, and they are often thinking about Christ and talking about Him to one another."

The little girls were here interrupted by the return of the others.

"O Alice, Alice," cried Douglas, as soon as they came near; "what do you think I saw from the top of the hill? The sea, the wide sea; and I have so long wished to see it, I did not know we were near it, and they did not tell me, that I might get a surprise; then when we got near the top of the hill Harry hurried me forward, but there was a high hedge, and I was busy talking, and never looked round till we got up on the stile, and there it was."

"Oh! how I should like to see it!" said Alice, eagerly, looking at M'Pherson.

"Indeed, Miss Alice," he said, "I could not let you climb the hill when master only allowed you to

go round by the glen, on condition you went no farther up than this. But you can see a little bit of the sea from the glen."

"And we will ask papa, Alice, to take us down to the sea-shore; we often go there in summer."

Alice asked if the other side of the hill was like this one.

"No," said Douglas, "there is no wood there, just a few trees here and there. Allen says that trees do not grow well near the sea, and that the reason why they grow so well here is that they are sheltered by the hill. By the by, Allen, how does our old friend the Karn get to the sea?"

"That is the curious thing about the glen," said Harry; "after going along for about two miles fuming and fretting because it cannot get through the hill, it suddenly finds such a curious opening at our glen. The glen winds so much, that at the top you cannot see the sea at all, except quite at the top of either bank, and there is such a pretty little spot there, where the grass is soft and green, some old trees grow close to the water, and a little burn comes tumble tumbling from the rock into the river, which is much quieter, and behaves himself more like an elderly gentleman there than in any other part of his course."

"Alice, do you see that gloomy-looking old house, a little way up the hill opposite, with the dull dark fir-trees coming so close to it?" said Allen, as they stopped for a few minutes opposite an opening in the wood, which permitted them to see into the valley. "Such a miserable old man, Sir Andrew Gray, lives there. He has quarrelled with all his neighbours; and they say that he has such a bad temper that he can hardly get enough servants to live with him to keep the old house at all in order."

"Has he any children?" Alice asked.

"Yes," he said, "I think he has several; but he has quarrelled with them all, except one daughter, who lives with him in that old gloomy house, poor girl, and he will not allow her to visit any of the neighbours."

"Poor lady," said Alice, "she must be very unhappy."

"She does not look unhappy," said Eleanor; "we see her at church. She looks grave; but yet, though I daresay she looks sad too, there is a sweet, quiet, almost happy expression, that I cannot make you understand until you have seen her."

"No, Eleanor, it is not easy to understand how a face can be both happy and sad at the same time," said Douglas, laughing.

"But what makes Sir Andrew quarrel with ever one in that way?"

"We will ask papa to tell us about him, for he use to know him long ago; and he says he should b a warning to us, but has never told us particularl about him."

CHAPTER IV.

THE GLEN.

"THEY had now reached the glen; there were two roads before them, one leading down to the sea, and the other up the glen.

"Master Allen," asked M'Pherson, "are you going down the glen any farther?"

"No," Allen said; "the primroses are all at the head of the glen."

"Then you had better go with Miss Alice a little bit along that road, that she may see the sea, as we promised; if you go to the turn you will see it."

The children did so, and Alice saw a little peep of the sea. It was not so grand, Douglas said, as his wide view; but it was very pretty; for the rocks of the glen, which prevented their seeing more, shut it in like the frame of a picture. While they were looking, a little boat shot across the opening, its sail shining brightly in the *sun.*

"Oh, how I should like to be in that boat," said Douglas; "it moves so smoothly along."

"We will ask papa to take us out in a boat when we go to the sea," said Harry.

As they came near the head of the glen they saw Mr and Mrs Graham with Gracie, and they ran forward to meet them.

"I thought you intended to come in the gig, papa," said Harry.

"Why, Harry," said Mr Graham, "we began to consider that though you may have a very good dining-room here, you have no stables; and as mamma liked the walk, we thought it might be more convenient to leave the gig."

"But did you walk, Gracie?" asked Eleanor, kissing the little girl, who, as I have said already, was the pet of the whole family.

"Oh no, papa carried Gracie on his shoulder sometimes," said Mr Graham, "and she says he is an excellent pony. But now, ladies, having condescended to perform the part of a pony in bringing one of your guests to your mansion, I would most respectfully remind you that a little dinner would not be unacceptable."

"Come and look at Eleanor's bantams while the girls prepare dinner. Mrs West was as considerate as you; for knowing we should have no poultry-yard at our

mansion, as you call it, she sought out a large wooden cage, and put them in it instead of in a basket."

Little Gracie and mamma admired the bantams very much, and they were certainly pretty creatures, with glossy black feathers that looked green and purple as they moved in the sunshine. Gracie ran back to the dining-room to get them some bread, and then she and Lewis carried some dinner to M'Pherson, who was busy relieving Jenny of the harness, and giving her the corn he had brought for her; for you must know that Jenny was a well-treated donkey, and considered herself quite as much entitled to a feed of corn as any of the ponies could be.

"Papa," said Eleanor, as she summoned him to dinner, "there is a nice comfortable stone for mamma to sit on, but indeed we could not find a shady spot for our dining-room where there were two."

"I suppose that means that I must sit on the grass, Eleanor," said Mr Graham, with a look of pretended resignation; "but I must say, I do not think it is very good treatment for an old gentleman like me, to make me act the part of a pony in bringing one of your guests, and then to give me no seat."

The dinner party was a very merry one; little Gracie, in particular, who had never before dined in the open air, *with the grass* for her table and chair, was in the

greatest glee. Many were the jokes papa made abou their dinner-table and chairs. Once when Harry got u hurriedly to get something for his mamma, he upset th jug of water on the table-cloth, and then Mr Graha asked Eleanor very gravely, if she were not afraid tha the water would spoil the fine varnish of her table. The when they came to cut up the pie, and it was discovere that the girls had only brought one plate for each perso Mr Graham insisted on going with them to the burn-sid to wash those they had been using already. He sai he went to help them, but he only kept them longer; h made them laugh so much at the many remarks he mad about the curious custom that seemed to prevail in thi primitive country of theirs, of making their guests was their own plates, pretending, too, that he did not kno at all how to set about it, and that he must watch them and imitate their motions; and when he saw Eleano shake one of the plates before she began to dry it, h gravely dipped his into the water again, because he ha dried it without doing so.

After dinner they began to seek for primroses. The found so many still in flower, that they determined t gather as large a bunch as they could find, for all th primrose banks nearer home were much earlier tha this shady glen, and the flowers were over. The girl wandered about near the river-side seeking them, whil

the boys climbed up among the rocks, and every now and then a shout of triumph was heard from one to another, as they discovered some dark shady corner where they were still in full beauty.

Mr Graham had gone farther down the glen for a walk, and Mrs Graham sat in the shade reading. In about an hour and a half the children came back with a large basketful of roots, and a beautiful bouquet. The day was very warm; and though they had often sat down to rest during their labours, yet the girls looked heated and tired, and Mrs Graham advised them to rest quietly beside her.

"Where are Gracie and Lewis?" Eleanor asked; "they left us long ago to come to you."

Mrs Graham answered, "that they had gone away to speak to the bantams and old Jenny." And papa, who just then joined them, said he had passed Gracie, Lewis, and M'Pherson, all sitting in a snug corner, and he thought M'Pherson was telling them a story.

"Well, papa, you had better follow his example, and tell us one," said Harry.

"O papa, please do; it will be so delightful while we are all lying here so comfortably."

"Well," said Mr Graham, "I think the best story I can tell you will be about an adventure mamma *and I met with* to-day."

"An adventure, papa! Why did you not tell us before?"

"For the very simple reason that you have all been so busy talking and laughing that I have had no opportunity of doing so till now. But now, as you are rather quiet, I shall begin by telling you, that after I had seen you young people away, I felt very idle, and very much indisposed either to read or write, so I persuaded mamma to go with me to the manse, to ask for Mrs Herbert, who has not been very well. We set off in the gig, and proceeded very quietly and soberly for some little way; but as it was hot and dusty on the high road, we soon turned into the cart-road that leads to the manse by the ford. We found this much cooler, and more pleasant, and were congratulating ourselves upon our wisdom in leaving the dusty road for this cool one, when a sudden turn made us aware of the startling fact that we could go no farther, as a gate had been put up across the road, about a hundred yards from where we stood. You must acknowledge that this was a very awkward dilemma; the road was much too narrow to admit of our turning, and here was a closed gate barring our further progress. Just then mamma pointed out to me a sort of green road which joined the one we were in, a few yards on our side of the gate, and we supposed that this must be a road some of you

children were speaking of a day or two ago, and which you said led round by the foot of the hill, and so into the manse road. As we could scarcely be worse off than we were, we boldly determined to try it. It was very pretty, and, like the one we had left, delightfully cool, from there being high banks, and a hedge on each side. It was very wild and deserted, and the complete solitude, and condition of the hedges and plantations, told us very plainly that we were in Sir Andrew Gray's woods, and that this road was never used now. We soon came to a place where there were evident signs of a fire having been lighted, and the grass was trodden, and the hedges broken down, as if to afford free entrance into the wood. We at once guessed that we had come upon the place where the gipsies had been encamped, who have been giving us so much trouble of late."

"Are the gipsies gone, then, papa?"

"Yes, I heard that several days ago; some thefts had been so clearly traced to the chiefs of the party, that the sheriff had issued warrants against them, and they hearing this, decamped so quickly and secretly, that no one knows where they have gone. But, to proceed with my story: Having passed this spot, we went on for about half an hour, without seeing any termination to the *road*, or any part broad enough to turn in.

All this time we had not met any one, and the number of rabbits and hares that we saw showed how little accustomed they were to being disturbed. 'There is certainly something white over the hedge,' said mamma at last; 'it must be either a woman's cap, or some clothes hung out to dry, and whichever it is, we shall surely, at least, find some one to tell us where this road ends.' 'If the bank is as high there as it is here, I do not think it can be either,' I replied; 'but the next turn of the road will allow us to see more plainly.' And now, which of you can tell me what that turn revealed?"

"O papa, please go on," cried several of the children.

Mr Graham, laughing at their curiosity and eagerness, continued. "We saw, as we turned the corner, a very small, rude tent, made of coarse sailcloth, the bank forming the back of it. While we were wondering what could be the meaning of such a thing being there, the cloth was raised in front, and a woman came out, and came down the road towards us. She was young, rather pretty, but looked very ill, and indeed, seemed scarcely able to walk. The sun was dazzling her eyes, and as I said, she walked a few steps towards us, shading her eyes with her hand, and looking earnestly at us; but as soon as she appeared to see us clearly,



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"Mamma assured her that we only wished to see if we could be of any use to her; then observing that her eye rested suspiciously on me, she asked me to go to the outside of the tent, as there was no one who could possibly harm her. I did so, and waited beside old Grey, nearly as impatient to hear the end of the adventure as you are just now, Eleanor. At last, mamma came to me, and told me that this poor young girl (for I do not think she can be more than eighteen years old) was the wife of one of the chiefs of the gipsies; that she had been very ill with fever at the time they got the alarm, and as they found she was quite unable to travel as quickly as they required to do, they had erected this rude tent for her, and giving her some food and water, had left her alone in this wild desolate place. Her food was all exhausted, and she was too weak and ill to seek for more, so that if we had not found her, she might have died of want. When she heard the sound of the wheels, she had fancied that, perhaps, her husband had taken compassion on her desolate state, and returned for her. But when she saw us, she then believed we had come to drag her to prison, and to try to force her to tell where her husband had gone to.

"'But,' she said, 'though he has left the wife who *would have* died for him, yet never would I tell what

might bring him to harm.' She appeared to feel his desertion very bitterly; often saying, 'Had he been ill, they might have killed me, but I never would have left him.'

"We were a little puzzled to know what to do to help her immediately, for she was evidently suffering from want of food; but as she was able to tell us that the road we were in led into the manse road, and also that we were not far from it, we determined to make our way there as quickly as possible, and send some one to take her to a more comfortable habitation.

"When Mr Herbert heard the story, he at once sent a cart for her and her baby, and they are to keep her till she recovers. We could not wait till she came, on account of our appointment with you, but I think we will go over and see her on Monday. Her little baby's clothes are very ragged, and I heard mamma asking Mrs Herbert to leave the care of providing new ones to her young needle-women, as there is one of them, at least, who is not very industrious, and mamma thinks that to have such a strong motive to work may perhaps be of use to her."

Alice blushed deeply; she knew that her uncle alluded to her.

"*And now,*" said Mrs Graham, "it is very late, and

after a whole day spent in idleness and exercise, I am sure you will all be glad to get home again."

As they were going home Mrs Graham told them, that she had a piece of good news for them, that Frank Herbert had come home, and that papa had engaged him to go down with them to the seashore on Thursday next week, and to take them out in a boat.

"O papa, we were just going to ask you to take us. When did Frank come home? Had Mr and Mrs Herbert been expecting him?"

"They knew," Mrs Graham said, "that his ship had arrived at Portsmouth, but had hardly hoped to see him so soon."

The children had so much to say about his arrival, their visit to the sea-shore, and the gipsy, that they were at home before they remembered to ask Mr Graham about Sir Andrew Gray.

"You must wait for that story," said Mr Graham, "for I am pretty sure that by the time tea is over, there will be a good deal of yawning and rubbing of eyes even among the oldest of you."

CHAPTER V.

A SABBATH AT KARNFORD.

IN spite of the fatigues of Saturday, Alice arose the next morning rather before her usual time. She was very impatient to tell Eleanor her difficulties about asking God's help in small duties and trials, and she had planned having a nice quiet talk before breakfast. She found no one in the study except Harry; the others were all out, he said, but he could not attend to his book when he was reading out of doors, and so he had remained in the study. He told Alice that she would most likely find Eleanor at her favourite seat on the lawn. She did find her there reading, but was a little disappointed to see Douglas with her. She would have liked better to speak to Eleanor when she was quite alone. But her desire to have the matter cleared up was too strong to allow her to refrain from telling Eleanor all her difficulty, even though she did feel a little afraid that Douglas would laugh at her. She therefore began at once by repeating part of her con-

versation with Marion, concluding by saying, "Surel Eleanor, Marion was wrong when she told me that w ought to ask God for help in such little things; that should seek for help to get rid of my laziness, f instance."

"But mamma says," replied Eleanor, "that we oug not to call anything little that is wrong, that is a s against God."

"No," said Alice, "but you cannot call laziness a s against God."

"If it is contrary to God's commandment, we mu call it a sin," said Eleanor. Then, turning to her Bibl she read to Alice, "redeeming the time because the da are evil," and "not slothful in business, fervent in spir serving the Lord."

Alice said she did not see how she could be sa to serve the Lord by being more diligent and acti in learning her lessons, or in things of that kind. Sl thought these words must be intended for grown-u people, who had difficult things to do and to bear, an not for little girls like her and Eleanor.

"But, Alice," said Eleanor, "these little things a all the business we have to do, and it is only in thes little things that we can serve the Lord. Beside papa says that the whole Bible is addressed to th young as well as to the old, and that as soon as

are old enough to understand the words, each commandment is as much addressed to us as if there were not another person in the world. And papa says, too, that we ought to bear this in mind every time we take the Bible into our hands, that we should remember they are the words of the great God we are going to read, and the words of that Saviour who has so loved us as to die for us. Then, when we read a commandment, each one of us should say to ourselves, 'It is *my* loving Saviour who commands *me* to do this,' or, when we read a promise or a threatening, '*My* Saviour promises this to *me*, or gives *me* this threatening to warn me.'"

Eleanor spoke very earnestly and solemnly, and both Alice and Douglas were silent for a moment or two. At last Douglas said,

"I cannot say, Eleanor, that I ever read the Bible in that way; it never seems to me as if I had much concern with what I read. And although since I came here I have liked to hear uncle explain the chapters we read with him, yet somehow I never think of taking them to myself as you say we ought to do. But still, Eleanor, I do not think you have answered Alice's objection that it would be presumptuous in her to go to the great God who made all this beautiful world, and who made and preserves all those numerous worlds we were looking at in the skies the other night; to go to Him, to ask for

help in such a trifling thing as getting the better of her idleness."

Eleanor again turned to her Bible and read, "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing, and one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father?" "I think it is one thing that makes God so great," she continued, "that He cares for everything, however small, even for the little caterpillar we showed you in the lime-tree yesterday. Do you know that verse, 'He that formed the eye, shall not he see?' Papa says that that should teach us, that God, who has put such love, kindness, and patience in papa's and mamma's hearts towards us, will Himself feel a great deal more tenderness and love for us, and that we should therefore go to God just as confidently as we go to him, and tell God all our trials and wants just as we would do to him."

"Eleanor," asked Douglas, very earnestly, "can you do this—can you go and ask of God as you would ask anything of uncle?"

Eleanor coloured very much, and her eyes filled with tears as she answered, "Sometimes I can, Douglas, and it makes me very happy when I can do it."

"And then do you feel as if God would hear you and answer you?" asked Douglas again in the same earnest tone.

"Yes," replied Eleanor, "because I know that it is

not for my sake He hears me, but for His own well-beloved Son's sake. And though He is so great and holy, and I so little and wicked, yet He looks on Christ who is infinitely great and holy, and loves me for Christ's sake, and for His sake answers my prayers."

Eleanor said this with much emotion, and the words seemed to come from her very heart.

"Then, Eleanor," said Douglas, "when you read in the Bible of all God's greatness, and look round you and see all the wonderful things He does, can you really feel as sure that He takes notice of you, and loves you, as you feel that aunt loves you?"

"Yes," replied Eleanor, "but only for Christ's sake."

Douglas turned away from Eleanor, and sighed. "I wish," he said, "that I could love God as you do, and go to Him as you do."

"O Douglas," said Eleanor, very earnestly, "only ask God for Christ's sake to make you love Him, and He will; oh, indeed, He will do it. Will you not ask Him?" she said, having paused a moment, almost breathless with eagerness to hear his answer.

"I do not think, Eleanor, that you and I have at all the same feeling about God or Christ. You seem to feel all these things to be much more real than I ever can do. I can scarcely think of God at all as really

seeing me, or knowing about me, though I have often heard it."

"Then, dear Douglas, just ask God to make you feel Him to be *real*," Eleanor began to say, when the bell for prayers summoned them to go into the house.

They were at church all day, as it was too far from Karnford to allow them to come home between services. After dinner all the children said some verses that they had chosen for themselves through the week, and then mamma took little Gracie and Lewis to the farther end of the room to read them some stories out of the Bible, while the others remained beside Mr Graham, repeating to him such hymns or verses as they liked; often asking one another to say a hymn or psalm they particularly admired. They talked about them, and Mr Graham listened so kindly to all they said, and explained what they did not understand, so nicely and clearly, that they felt sorry when the tea-tray was brought in.

After Gracie and Lewis had gone to bed, the others gathered round papa and mamma in their favourite window-seat, and Mrs Graham told Alice and Douglas that they would see how much they could all remember of the sermons, and to find in them a rule for their conduct through the next week.

They did not do this in any regular formal way, but

helped one another, and yet there was none of that interrupting of one another which is so often the case, where each child is anxious to prove how much more he remembers than the rest. The little Grahams seemed only anxious to make the repetition of the whole as complete as possible.

Both of the sermons had been upon the Lord our Shepherd, and after they had recollected among them all the principal heads, and many little passages that had particularly pleased one or other of them, Mr Graham said they should now talk about them, and see how they applied to themselves.

"Papa," said Harry, "I know the part that is of most use to me. It is the part where Mr Herbert said, 'that some of us were well pleased to think of Christ as our Shepherd, and to dwell upon His leading us and taking care of us, while we never considered that the sheep also have something to do—that they must listen to and obey His voice.' I *do* like so much to think of Christ as loving me and caring for me; but," he continued, his eyes filling with tears, "I do not think about what Mr Herbert said, 'that if Christ has loved me so much, I ought also to love Him and try to serve Him.' And when Mr Herbert went on to speak of those who are willing to be saved from hell by Christ's death, to be carried in His arms, and kept by Him from

all danger, but who, by their sinful, careless life, are doing all they can to wound and grieve Him, and serve the cause of the devil, who hates Him, I felt that that is just what I do when I never take any trouble to *keep right*, but go on, day after day, doing just as I like best, without thinking of what Christ wishes me to do. And oh! papa, you know Mr Herbert said that such people show that they have never really gone to Christ, but are still enemies to God,—children of wrath, and servants of the devil."

Harry's voice faltered as he said these last words and, unable to say more, he hid his face on his, mamma's shoulder.

Mrs Graham put her arm kindly round her little boy, as she said, "I think, Harry, we may find parts of the sermon that will comfort you."

"You mean, mamma," said Eleanor, "that part where Mr Herbert said that we are different from sheep, because we by nature have no desire to go to our Shepherd, but keep away from Him. And he said, this is one excellency in our Shepherd, that He gives us His Holy Spirit to make us hear and follow Him. He said too, that if any one hearing him felt himself so weak and wicked that he could not love Christ, or follow Him, he would tell him that Christ will carry the weak and helpless lambs in His bosom; and that,

when it is said that Christ leads His sheep in green pastures and beside the still waters, it means that He is ready to give each of us just what we need; faith to believe in Him, and a heart to love Him."

"Does that not suit you, Harry?" said Mr Graham, in a very kind voice. "When you feel that you *cannot* love Christ, or give up your own will to His, does it not comfort you to hear that He will Himself enable you to do it?"

"Yes, papa," said Harry, "but I always forget it again. While we are speaking just now, I feel as if I could never forget Christ's love to me, and never forget how wicked it is to wound and grieve Him; but then, when I begin to other things—to my lessons tomorrow, or to our play, I forget all about it, and go on again doing everything to please myself alone."

"You must just go to your heavenly Father, Harry, and tell Him, as you have told me, how difficult it is for you to remember Him; and ask Him to give you His Holy Spirit to make you love Him so truly, as that you shall *delight* to remember Him through the whole day, and to do all to Him, and for His sake; and, Harry, you have *His* promise who cannot lie, that if you ask for Christ's sake, you *shall* receive."

There was a minute's silence, and then Mr Graham continued, "We must all try to remember, through every

day, and every hour's little difficulties and duties, how much we have heard to-day of Christ's tender love and care for us, and the obligation there is upon us to serve Him in everything we do. If we remember this, it will make us diligent and earnest in doing even little things, for then they will not seem trifles, if, by doing them well, we can please so tender a Saviour. We shall keep from cross or selfish words or actions, because they wound and grieve Christ, who wishes all His sheep to love one another. Perhaps, too, some one who does not yet know Christ, seeing us gentle, kind, and unselfish for His sake, may be led to seek that knowledge of Christ which brings forth such pleasant fruits. And if we can, by denying ourselves, and restraining our tempers, make one single person seek after Christ, will not that be reward enough for any effort it may cost us? But remember, my dear children, it is not an easy thing to follow Christ as His sheep,—it is not a thing we may begin to-day and leave off to-morrow; but it must be the work of every day and every hour. And this will require such constant striving and watching, that we shall soon find, if we have not done so already, that we need God's help every day and every hour. And, above all, we must ever remember, that it is not anything that we can do or suffer, that is to save us, but only the *full* and *per-*

fect satisfaction that Christ has made for sin, in dying for us on the cross."

"Uncle," said Alice, when Mr Graham had concluded, "I did not know that sheep would follow the voice of their shepherd."

Mr Graham told her there was an allusion here to the customs of the East, where the shepherd uses a particular call for his sheep which they know and obey.

"But I think," he continued, "my little Alice would have heard Mr Herbert explain this to-day, if she had been listening."

Alice blushed very deeply as she replied—"Uncle, I have never thought of listening as my cousins do, in order to apply the sermons to myself. I always thought that they were too difficult for me to understand; but I will try next Sunday to understand and remember all I hear."

"You may not be able to understand it all, but I think, if you try, you will understand the greater part of what Mr Herbert says."

"Uncle," said Douglas, "I thought that you were going to ask each of us what part of the sermons applied most to ourselves, and I had thought of a part that suited me."

"If you like to tell me what that was, I will tell you afterwards why I did not ask each of you."

"It was that part, uncle," said Douglas, "where Mr Herbert said, 'There are some people who trust to themselves, and think they can do everything in their own power, and can go to the green pastures without any shepherd to lead them.' That, I think, is what I have always done; and often, when you have told us that we must get help from God to do such and such things, I have thought I could do them myself without help. I think, Eleanor, that was one reason that made me insist this morning that we should not go to God for help in *little* things."

"And do you now see that you were wrong in thinking this?" said Mr Graham.

"Uncle, I do feel that I have never tried to do everything for God, and I do not think I can do that without help. I mean, that I think I can make myself be quiet when I feel tempted to say a provoking thing to any one, but I do not feel as if I can make myself do it just out of love to God. I cannot express it rightly, but you know what I mean, do you not, uncle?"

"I think I do, Douglas. You mean that you can make yourself *do* what is right, but not *feel* what is right; and that now, when you are beginning to learn that 'God looketh on the heart,' you are also be-

ginning to learn that you cannot please Him in your own strength, as you once thought you could."

"Yes, uncle, that is what I mean; and this makes me understand what Eleanor said this morning, that God only loves us for Christ's sake; because I seem to know now that I cannot make God love me for my own sake, and I do not think I ever felt that before."

"I rejoice to hear you say so, my dear Douglas; and may God, who has begun to teach you your need of a Saviour, make you feel it still more, and lead you to Christ, who can alone help you. As to your question," continued Mr Graham, after having paused for a moment to allow Douglas to think of what he had been saying, "when we speak about the sermon together in this way, I am always a little afraid of leading any of you to speak too much of yourselves, and I therefore prefer trying to find out in a general way, what rules we can get for our conduct through the week, to making each one point out the particular passage which applies to her or him individually."

"I do not quite understand you, uncle," said Douglas.

"I will try to be a little more clear," said Mr Graham. "I was very glad to-night to hear my dear

Harry and you voluntarily confess that you felt parts of the sermon apply to your own peculiar faults. But if I were in the habit of saying to each of you every Sunday night, What fault in you did the minister speak of? then you might often seek to find out things you really had not felt, just in order to satisfy me. It is always a bad plan to speak too much about ourselves. Each of you should take to yourselves the part that belongs to you, and use what you hear or read as a restraint to keep you from your own particular faults. But I am always afraid of a *pretended* candour, if we speak too much of our failings before others.

"By pretended candour, uncle, do you mean that we will say we have faults that we have not?"

"No," Mr Graham said, "that is not what I mean. If any of you know that you have a particular fault, of which you also know I am quite unconscious, and if you tell me that you have this fault, either in order to get my advice as to how you should set about conquering it, or because you think it is right to undeceive me as to your real character, that would be candour, *real* candour. But you can easily see, that to tell me of a fault I am aware of, is a far less painful thing than to run the risk of lessening my esteem for you by revealing to me a fault of which I might always *have continued* ignorant. If, therefore, after hearing a

sermon, which you perceive bears on your impatience, pride, or whatever the fault may be, I ask you, if you think that any part of it applies to you, do you not see that you would be very apt to confess it, from the fear of my thinking you have either not sense enough to discover, or not candour enough to own your faults? A confession made from such a motive does not at all deserve the name of candour, while yet it has the appearance of it, and also enables you to indulge the natural inclination of speaking about yourselves."

Douglas acknowledged that his uncle was quite right. He remembered occasions on which he had exercised this false kind of candour, and had received great praise from his father for it. This evening's conversation, and the one he had with Eleanor in the morning, had given him so many new subjects for thought, that he was not sorry when the others took their books, and left him to follow his meditations without interruption.

CHAPTER VI.

THE GIPSY.

"HOW many of you intend to go to see the gipsy?" asked Mrs Graham the next morning at breakfast.

"Oh, we all wish to go!"

"All of you!" said Mrs Graham, laughing; "she might certainly have some reason to fear that you were going to drag her to prison, as she thought papa and I meant to do on Saturday. But, seriously, you would make much too large a party to go to see an invalid; and I think the girls should have the preference."

"But what are we to do without the girls, aunt?"

"You may ride to M——, and execute a little commission for me, if you please," replied Mrs Graham. "I find that I shall require materials for the little caps and frocks, and you may get them for me."

This proposal was received with great glee by the

boys, who began to talk about what they would buy, using the names of all the different stuffs that they had ever heard the girls speak about, and of course using them all wrong. Mrs Graham said she saw very plainly that it would not do to trust to them, but she would write a note to the shopkeeper, which they might take to M——, and bring her out the things.

"But, mamma," said Eleanor, "allow the boys to choose the stuff for the little coloured frocks, for they have very good taste. Allen chose this frock I have on, and you know, mamma, you say that it is the prettiest print you ever saw."

Mrs Graham agreed, telling them they might each choose one, which would give each of the girls a frock to make; and then they had a great deal of amusement in settling which of the boys each was to choose for her knight. Allen said Eleanor must take him because she had praised his taste so much, and Harry entreated Alice to choose him.

"Then, Marion," said Douglas, "I will be yours, and when we are coming home we shall fasten a piece of the print in our caps, as the knights use to wear their lady's colours long ago."

After all these plans were settled, it was a great disappointment to see the sky gradually overcast, and before lessons were concluded it had begun to rain

heavily, and the gray unbroken look of the clouds gave no promise of fair weather that afternoon.

Mrs Graham advised them to have a good game at ball, battledore and shuttlecock, or something of that kind first, and then, she said, if the girls would come to her, they might begin their work, and taking advantage of the bad day, a good deal might be done towards making the poor little baby more comfortable.

"And what are the boys to do, aunt?" asked Douglas, "are they to sew too?" and sitting down on the carpet, like a tailor, he began to pretend to sew, as if he had a terribly long thread.

Alice and Eleanor laughed very heartily at Douglas, but Marion was too much disappointed to be amused with anything; she would not go away with the others when they went to play, but remained standing at the dining-room window, looking out idly and discontentedly at the heavy rain.

"Come and help me to put on Miss Doll's new frock," said little Gracie; "come away," she said again, pulling Marion by the sleeve, when she did not answer.

"Leave me alone, Gracie," was Marion's petted reply, "you are such a tiresome, provoking little thing."

"It was not Gracie who sent the rain, Marion," said Mr Graham, looking up gravely from his book.

Marion blushed. "I know, papa, that it is wrong to feel so much provoked when it is God who sends the rain; but indeed, it is so annoying to think of all the pleasures we expected to-day."

"Then do not think of it, my dear, if it makes you feel what you know to be wrong. Come, my little Marion, exercise some control over yourself. I shall not bid you go and play for your own sake, in order that you may have *some* pleasure, though not what you expected, but in order that the pleasure of the rest may not be spoiled by thinking of you as being unhappy and dull. Go and play for their sake, and take the part in their games that you all dislike most, and I think your good temper and cheerfulness will return. I know that it is very difficult to do this, I feel very much inclined to be cross and dull myself this afternoon, as I had particularly wished to go to the manse to-day; so while you are trying hard to keep down grumbling and peevishness in the playroom, you may think of me as needing to try as hard beside the fire here."

Mr Graham said this in such a kind way, half smiling, and yet really seeming to know that it was not very easy for Marion to make this effort, that she thought she could not but try his plan; so she went first to dress Gracie's doll, trying to be intetested in

it and to make it very neat. Then she ran up-stairs to the large play-room, where the others were delighted to see her. Knowing that she had had the most difficulty in overcoming her discontent, they were all anxious to play at whatever game she liked best. But Marion remembered her papa's advice, and though the game she found them playing at happened to be one she did not like, she yet insisted on their going on with it.

When she went down-stairs with Eleanor and Alice, that they might begin their work, she found Mr Graham playing with Gracie in the hall.

"Well, Marion," he said, "you see I have got away my dulness, and I do not think you look very dull either. Am I not a good doctor?"

"Indeed, indeed you are, and my own good kind papa," replied Marion. "If you had scolded me today for being so cross to Gracie, I was so peevish and unreasonable that I am sure I would just have gone to my room in a pet. But you spoke to me so cheerfully and kindly, that I only felt it would be a nice thing to try your plan. And then it was such a good plan in itself, for, as mamma says, we are often able to give pleasure to other people when we are too dull or too much disappointed to get pleasure ourselves."

"Well, my little Marion," said her papa, "do not you think that this should teach you to watch other people's tempers, and when you see that any one is inclined to be cross or fretful, just as you were to-day, then you should take care not to irritate them, but rather give way to them as far as you can till they get better again. I think last Wednesday, when I sent Harry out of the room for being so cross, that had you been less provoking to him when you must have seen he was irritated, he would not have got so passionate as he did."

They were interrupted by Douglas, who came to see why Marion was not coming to the drawing-room; he said that his aunt had appointed him to the office of reader aloud, and he was impatient to begin. Douglas read very well, and both before dinner and after tea, he read to the girls while they worked busily at the baby-clothes. Neither Eleanor nor Marion liked needle-work at all; but they had been so well accustomed to help their mamma in making clothes for poor people, that it was not nearly so difficult for them as it was for Alice to go on working steadily and industriously, even though they did not like it. Poor Alice did weary very soon, and she had a hard struggle to keep herself from giving up the work long before she had finished what her aunt had

given her to do. She did, however, succeed in gaining this victory over her laziness, and she acknowledged that the pleasure she felt in looking at the comfortable little shift she had made, was quite sufficient reward for her labour.

The next day, though dull, was quite fair, and the girls, with Mr and Mrs Graham, went after luncheon to see the gipsy. They found her much better, but still very weak. She was very grateful for all the kindness she had received, and seemed much gratified by the interest the girls took in her little baby.

"Uncle," said Alice, as they were going home, and she and Mr Graham were together on the driving seat of the drosky, "I think it would be so nice if we could persuade that poor woman to stay here always, and not to join her stealing, wicked friends again. Do you think we could do so?"

Mr Graham said he was not sure; he thought that if she were detained by weakness long enough to profit by Mr and Mrs Herbert's kind instructions, so as to see the wickedness of the life her friends led, there might be some hope of her remaining with them. Mrs Herbert had told him that she had conversed with her, and found her most deplorably ignorant. She did not appear to have ever heard of God before.

"*But then*, uncle, if Mrs Herbert teaches her every

day, she may make her see how wrong it would be for her to go back to her friends again, and steal and cheat as she used to do."

"My dear little girl," said Mr Graham, "Mrs Herbert can teach this poor woman that there is a God who sees her, and who is angry with her when she does wrong. But she cannot make her believe in that God, so as that the fear of offending Him shall be stronger than the desire of rejoining her husband and other friends. You know she has another child, and I do not think that any arguments we could use would be strong enough to make her give up that child and her husband."

"Would it be right for us to try to keep her from them, uncle?"

"That is rather a difficult question, Alice. It would certainly be right for us to try to keep her from going again to commit sin, and from removing herself out of the way of hearing of God. But yet she has duties as a wife and a mother. The thing we should most wish would be, that God would so bless Mr and Mrs Herbert's kind instructions, as that her heart may be really changed, and filled with love to her Saviour. Then if she felt it was her duty to leave us and go to her friends again, it would not be to join them in cheating and stealing, but to teach them too

what she had learned. Were this to be the case, Alice, we should feel when she left us, that though she was going into a scene of temptation and trial, yet she had One with her who was greater than all who might be against her; and if she were really a child of God, she would be preserved by Him amidst all her temptations, and He might bless her efforts, and make her the means of saving many of her friends."

"Oh, uncle, how I wish that might be."

"You can help in this, Alice; we can all help by our prayers. God bids us ask, and we ought all to remember to ask Him to bless Mr and Mrs Herbert's efforts, and to send His own Spirit into this poor creature's heart to bring her to Himself."

"Dear uncle," said Alice, after she had remained silent for a minute or two, "you do not know how much happier I have been since I came here. I never used to feel as if I could be of use to any one, but rather was a plague to everybody through my stupidity. But since I came here, you have shown me so many things, that even such a little girl as I can do. On Sunday night, when you said that by watching over our tempers, we might perhaps be of use in making some one person think more about Christ, *and seek* more to know Him; and then again just

now, when you said that I might help that poor woman by praying for her, you gave me such a happy feeling, that I might be of *some* use."

"Everybody may do *something* for God. But the great question we ought each to ask ourselves, is, 'Am I doing *all* I can?' You ought not to be satisfied with doing more than others, or more than you *used* to do, but see if you are leaving undone *nothing* that you can do."

Alice sighed.

"You do not like to hear me say this, Alice," said Mr Graham, smiling; "you do not like to be reminded of how much there remains for you to do yet, and you would rather think with pleasure on what you have done, than look forward to what you have to do. Is it not so?"

"You know, uncle, that I am very indolent, and I must say that it sometimes frightens me to think, that I must always go on doing something, never coming to a time when I may rest satisfied; but that every day I must exert myself, and that when I have struggled against wrong things, and done right to-day, I must just begin again to-morrow."

"That is exactly what Harry says about his impatient temper, and I will say to you as I did to him, that the great lesson you require to learn is, not to

look upon your own gratification as the business of each day, but to remember that you are sent into this world to glorify God, and that your chief concern each day ought to be, how you may best do this. But this is a very difficult lesson to learn; none can teach you this but God himself. Ask Him, then, dear Alice, and He will enable you so truly to believe that Christ died for you, and that without Him you must have perished everlastingly, as that your heart will be filled with love to Him who has *so* loved you, and that love will make you rejoice when you can do anything for Him. You will not then be anxious to know how *little* you need do, but you will ask yourself each morning, 'How *much* can I do to-day for my Saviour?'"

"I wish I could feel that, uncle; but do not you think it is very hard indeed to get the better of indolence?"

"I do, dear Alice; and the exertion that is necessary to get rid of any bad habit must be much greater to you, because you have first to overcome your disinclination to make any exertion at all. But, my dear little girl, the more difficult your task is, you have the more need to ask God to help you, and if you ask you will receive. Only you must take care, that, having *asked* God's help, you do not give up all exertion on

your own part, as if you expected all to be done without you. Be constantly on the watch to exert yourself on every occasion, even on little ones. For instance, to-night, in preparing your French lessons, stir up your mind to do them actively, and get them finished quickly. Or, to take a smaller instance still, when you are going up-stairs to take off your bonnet and prepare for dinner, do everything as quickly as you can, and as a reward, when you come down-stairs, I will show you the engravings I told you of this morning."

"Then, uncle," said Alice, hesitatingly, "for even such a little thing as my moving more quickly about my room, and beginning to dress at once instead of sitting idly in my chair for a minute or two; do you mean I should do these from such a great motive?"

"If you feel, Alice, that it is your duty to endeavour to get rid of your indolence, then even such little things as these we have mentioned are of importance, because they help you to break the habit. Never think it is enough to conquer bad habits in one or two great things every day, but do it in every trifle, and you will succeed much sooner. So now that we are at home, let me see how actively you can jump down from your elevated seat."

CHAPTER VII.

THE LAME BOY.

"AUNT," said Douglas, as the girls were preparing to resume their work after tea, "will you tell us the history of the bookseller's clerk uncle went to see when he was in London, and who, you said, was one of your heroes?"

"How will you employ yourself, Douglas, if I deprive you of the occupation of reading to us? I do not think I can tell you the story if you are to be idle; you are so restless that you will quite put me out."

"I have found a very useful occupation for myself, aunt. I am going to disentangle and arrange that mass of worsteds that Miss Buchanan gave to Eleanor; she can make no use of them till they are unravelled."

"Indeed, Douglas," said Eleanor, "I am very much obliged to you; but I am afraid you will find it very tiresome."

"Perhaps so," replied Douglas; "but I know a little

girl who has been very kind and gentle to me ever since I came here, and who has submitted to all my teasing, without ever losing her temper; and I am sure the desire to be of use to her will help me to accomplish the task, however tiresome it may be. Besides," he continued, "I expect aunt's story to be so interesting that I shall not weary."

"I am not sure that it will be so very interesting as you expect, Douglas, though I think it may be of use to all of you. Shall I begin by telling you my hero's history as I afterwards heard it, or by giving you an account of my first seeing him?"

"By telling us about your first seeing him. You told me that it was soon after your marriage, when you were living at ——. I did not know, aunt, that you and uncle had not always lived here."

"At the time of our marriage, your uncle's eldest brother lived here. Your uncle was then a manager in one of the large banks in ——, and lived in a house in the suburbs of the town. He came home every day at a certain hour, and I used to sit at our dining-room window to watch for him. We lived in a very quiet street, where there were few passengers; so that I soon observed that there were two people, who passed every day, a few minutes before the time when your uncle used to come home. They were a poorly dressed, very

plain-looking woman, and a lame boy. The poor fellow excited my compassion, he was so much deformed. He seemed to have no power in his legs, which hung helplessly down, as he swung himself along on crutches. I noticed them first from pity; but as I observed them more closely, there were something very pleasing in the expression both of his countenance and of the woman's. I have said that they were very plain-looking, but there was an expression of quiet contentment that really gave a charm to their very ordinary features.

"I had watched them for some time, but had always forgotten to ask my husband if he knew them; when, one day, when I opened the door to him, I found him conversing with the very people who had so much excited my attention. When he came in, I asked him eagerly who they were. He told me that they were very decent, industrious people, but that I must go to Mrs Campbell, to hear their whole history, as they were particular protégés of hers.

"Mrs Campbell was the wife of our minister; and her great kindness to me when I went to ——, made me feel as if we had been old friends. I was so eager to hear about my friends that I went to her next day, and she gave me an account of her first acquaintance with them, just as I am doing to you.

"She and her husband had lived, until about two years before this time, in a very retired country parish, and Mrs Campbell said it had been with a very heavy heart that they had made up their minds to leave it, and come in to the dirty, bustling town of ——. From many different circumstances, however, they had been led to see very clearly that it was their duty to do so. And Mrs Campbell said, that, at first, the feeling that they were really sacrificing their own inclinations to a sense of duty, had kept her from feeling the pain of leaving their old parish so much as she had expected to do. The desire, too, to avoid increasing, by any exhibition of her own grief, the deep, heartfelt sorrow of her husband in leaving his people, had enabled her to continue cheerful and unrepining to the last. But almost immediately after they came to ——, she had a severe feverish attack, and then, while weakened by illness, the regret with which she looked back on the place they had left, was almost more than she could bear. She used to sit, she said, in her gloomy bedroom, looking out of the window upon the smoky, dull houses opposite, and contrast it with the bright, sunny view she had been accustomed to. And she used to picture to herself all the evils that she fancied were going to befall them,—her children pining away for want of the fresh air they had been accustomed to;

her husband over-working himself among an ignorant and indifferent people, where he would have nothing to cheer and help him to endure the fatigue, as he had had in the love and sympathy of the people they had come from. Then, amid all the sickness and sorrow that she imagined were about to enter her once happy family, they were far from their old and tried friends. Mrs Campbell used to laugh, as she repeated to me all these dismal fancies; but she said, that at the time, they completely depressed her, and made her feel as if she could never be happy again. I must tell you, however, that discontent or murmuring is by no means a feature of Mrs Campbell's character. On the contrary, she is one of the most cheerful, happy persons I ever met with; and a great part of the depression and gloom she then felt proceeded from her being weakened by illness. When she was able to go to church, that did her good, but not so much as she had expected, for the congregation had been much neglected for many years, and at that time there were few among them who had any real interest in religion; and it must have been a painful thing for her to look around upon a sleepy, careless people, and contrast their appearance with the eager attention of their former congregation.

"*In the* course of the week after she had been for

the first time in their new church, Mr Campbell asked her to take a walk with him. Instead of leading her towards the quieter and more country parts of the town, he took her through several dirty, smoky streets; and feeling that the sight of these increased rather than diminished her uncomfortable feelings, she was just going to propose returning home, when Mr Campbell turned into a long, narrow, dirty lane, with mean, dull-looking houses on each side, saying that he wished to introduce her to a family belonging to his congregation, as he thought she might be of use in visiting them. Mrs Campbell sighed, as she recalled to mind the pleasure she used to have in visiting the cottagers in their old parish; but as she was beginning, by this time, to see that it was sinful to indulge in these vain regrets, she tried to feel an interest in the family she was going to see. Mr Campbell said that the father and eldest son were carpenters, and though not very clever, they were so attentive and punctual that they had a pretty good business. But there was a large family of them, and the wife had a mother and delicate sister who were entirely dependent on them for support; so that he did not believe they were very well off. There was nothing interesting in the family, he said; they were all plain, and indeed rather stupid-looking, and they were very quiet people, who had little to say, but

from various circumstances he had heard of, he believed them to be very serious, good people; and there was a poor little lame boy, that he thought his wife might be of use to. The door was opened by Mrs Scott herself. She appeared glad to see Mr Campbell, but said very little. The room she took them into was clean and neat, but dark and dull, and in one corner, on a sort of bed his father had made for him, lay poor James. He had entirely lost the use of his limbs, and could not even turn himself in bed; but there he lay, in that dull place, so contented and happy-looking, that Mrs Campbell said that she felt completely ashamed of her own repinings. They spoke to him, and Mrs Campbell asked him if he did not weary lying there all day, unable to move; and she told me, she never would forget the feeling of self-reproach it gave her to hear him say, 'Oh, but I am not so ill off; I can move my arms a little;' and he showed her the many little contrivances his father and brother had invented to make him comfortable; a little reading-desk, a shelf for his books, &c. Mrs Campbell thought that, perhaps, if he had never been able to move about, and enjoy himself with boys of his own age, that might make him more contented under the want of it. But till he was eight years old, his mother said, he had been *quite strong* and healthy; and it was a fever he had

then, that reduced him to his present helpless condition.

"'And do you never get out to breathe the fresh air, and see the sunshine?' asked Mrs Campbell.

"'Oh,' answered James, in his quiet, cheerful tones, 'mother often opens the window, and then, in the summer evenings, there is such a bonnie, cheery glint o' sunshine comes on my wall.'

"'You have brought me here to learn a lesson I much needed,' said Mrs Campbell to her husband, as they left the house; 'and I hope that henceforward I shall not forget to look for James's "glints o' sunshine," however dark my lot may seem to be.'

"After this Mrs Campbell went very often to see poor James; and the more she saw of the whole family the more did she like and respect them. They were people of very few words, with no striking qualities about them, nothing to distinguish them from their neighbours, except their quiet, good sense, their contentment and industry, and above all, their sincere piety. They did not say much about their love to God, or their desire to serve Him, but no one could see much of them, without discovering that these were the ruling motives of their lives. It was the same with their affection for each other, and their kindness to their fellow-men; they never spoke about feeling

either, but both were most manifest in their whole conduct. All the family, who were at all able, were obliged to work very hard. Mrs Scott took in washing, though she had several young children, besides her helpless boy, to attend to; and Jeanie, a girl younger than James, had been for a twelvemonth acting as errand-girl in a shop.

"James could do nothing for the support of the family, but he tried to make himself as useful as he could in amusing the children, so as to keep them from disturbing his mother, when she was busy; and although he delighted in reading, he would at any time lay aside the most interesting book, to tell them a story, draw them a picture, or do anything he could to keep them quiet. He was very careful, too, to give little trouble; his mother said, that however weary he might be of lying in one posture, he never would interrupt her in her work, to turn him, but wait patiently till she was at leisure.

"I tell you all these particulars, my dear children, because, much as I admire the efforts James made afterwards to overcome his own inclinations, that he might be of use to his family, yet, in such little things as these, he displayed that patience, unselfishness, and command over his inclinations, that have made me call *him a hero.* And you can imitate him in these little

things, while you may never have an opportunity of following his example in his greater efforts."

"Aunt, if these things make him a hero," interrupted Douglas, "I do not think it would be very difficult to be one."

"Much more difficult than you imagine, Douglas," replied Mrs Graham. "It would not be so difficult for any of you to make a violent effort once to force yourself to do something that is very disagreeable to you, or to bear some great misfortune patiently; but to go on day after day caring for others more than for yourself, and looking out, as Mrs Campbell expressed it, for 'glints o' sunshine,' in small as well as great things, requires a constant watchfulness and effort that I am not sure any of you can exercise.

"But to go on with my story. I have several times said that all the Scotts spoke very little, particularly about themselves; and so, although it was easy to see from the books James liked best, and from his every-day behaviour, that he had a real interest in religion, yet Mrs Campbell had visited him for some little time before she had heard him give expression to his feelings on the subject. He listened with deep interest to all she said, and she often observed, when speaking to him of the love of Christ, and of the full and perfect satisfaction He has made for our sins, that his

whole face would light up with an expression of love and peace. Still he had never spoken openly to her, and when one morning a message was brought to her that James Scott had been very ill, and was thought to be dying, she felt, as she hurried with her husband to see him, a very great anxiety to hear from his own lips that he knew that Christ was indeed *his* Saviour, and that he could die in peace, committing his soul to Him. When they went in, they found him very ill, and suffering much. He smiled, and held out his hand to her, but appeared unable to speak from the extreme violence of the pain.

"'Do you think you are dying, James?' she asked him.

"He smiled, and made a sign in the affirmative. His weeping mother told them that the pain had continued without intermission the whole night; but that he had never murmured, and as long as he could speak had said, 'I am very happy.'

"'I wish he could tell us,' said Mrs Campbell, 'what makes him so happy under such severe suffering.'

"His mother was going to speak, when James said himself, slowly, and with great difficulty, but with an earnestness and a smile which Mrs Campbell said she did not think she would ever forget,

"'*God* commendeth His love to us, in that, while

we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.' Then, after a moment's pause, he continued with still more emphasis, 'Sinners—enemies—ungodly.'

"He recovered from this severe attack to his usual state of health; and Mrs Campbell said, that much as she had been interested in him before, she now loved him almost as if he were her own child. She saw him almost every day while he was recovering; and now when his reserve was broken through, and he spoke freely to her, she often received instruction from his simple, clear, humble views of the salvation by Christ alone, and from observing how his love to that Saviour influenced his every thought, and word, and action. His patience and unselfishness did not then astonish her so much, for she saw that he seldom thought of himself, and that he had such a constant feeling of Christ's being really present with him, caring for him, and observing him, that nothing seemed too hard for him to do or bear for His sake.

"The only point on which his good sense and strength of mind seemed to fail him, was his excessive sensitiveness about his deformed appearance. His mother told Mrs Campbell that they had been very anxious at one time to contrive some plan for getting him into the open air occasionally; but that one evening, when his elder brother had carried him a little

way in his arms, some of the children in the streets had followed him, making remarks on poor James, which he felt so severely, that he begged them never to ask him to go out again. He had an uncle, who was a labourer in a large farm in the neighbourhood, and both he and his wife had often pressed Mrs Scott to send James to them, thinking that the cheerful sights and sounds of the country would amuse him, and that he might easily be carried out there in the warm weather to lie on the grass. But his sensitive fear of being remarked upon, and perhaps laughed at, made him very unwilling to go among people, who, as he said, were not used to his deformity. And as the doctor did not think change of air could be of any material advantage to a disease seated so deep as his was, his father and mother never pressed him to do what he so very much disliked. His uncle and aunt were very sorry for him, and very kind to him, and they sent him many little presents of fresh eggs, and such vegetables and fruits as their small garden produced. Their kind-hearted mistress at the farm, too, occasionally gave them a chicken, some new-made butter, or little things of that kind, to send to their poor, helpless nephew.

"One day, when James had almost recovered from *the effects of* the illness I have told you of, Mrs

Campbell found him in the house alone, and with an expression of care and sorrow on his face that was very unusual to him. She at first feared something had happened.

"'No,' James said, 'they were all well; his mother had to take some clothes to a family who lived a little way out of town, and it was such a fine day, he had persuaded her to take the children with her. Their next-door neighbour was very kind to him, and had long ago made his father put up a bell to ring into her house, so that when Mrs Scott required to go out at any time, he could call her to his assistance if he needed anything.'

"'But something has vexed you to-day, James?' said Mrs Campbell.

"He coloured very much, and then, with a good deal of hesitation, told her the cause of his sorrow. Soon after his mother went out, his uncle's eldest boy had come in with a basket from his mother, containing some little delicacies for James. This boy, though James did not say so, was very cross and ill-tempered. He had long been jealous of his father's and mother's kindness to James, and envious of the many good things that were sent to him. 'He wished his mother would give him some of the good things, instead of sending them all to James; and it was too bad that all

the first early gooseberries and currants were to be sent down to him.' On this particular day, too, he was more provoked than usual at being sent with the basket, because he had planned an excursion for his own amusement. In this mood he arrived at Mrs Scott's, and finding no one at home but poor James, he had not scrupled to vent his ill-humour on him, in taunts and sneers at his uselessness. 'It was a fine thing,' he said, 'to have lost the use of one's legs, and to lie there all day, doing nothing but amusing himself, while other people toiled for him to keep him comfortable; it was a fine thing to have people praising him for being so contented; but for his part, he should be ashamed of being contented to see his poor mother and sister working hard all day long, and he never able to do anything to help them. Oh, it was an easy thing to be contented to do nothing; and some people had so little thought for others, that while they were comfortable themselves, it did not at all disturb them to see their friends worn out with work.'

"Poor James could scarcely finish his story. He never, as I told you, made many protestations of his affection for his parents, or brothers and sisters; but he did feel their kindness very much; and to be accused of ingratitude was a sore trial to him.

"Mrs Campbell did all she could to comfort him,

representing to him the folly and falsehood of his cousin's words, and reminding him that though it was difficult to bear the being obliged to remain useless while the rest were labouring for the support of the family, yet this part of his trial, as well as every other part, was sent by that God who had already taught him to call Him Father, and to look upon every trial as sent in love. 'Pray to Him, my dear James,' she said, 'and He will give you strength to bear this sore painful feeling of uselessness, as He has enabled you to bear every other grief that He has sent to you.'

"James then told her that there was one thing that grieved him far more than what Tom had said, and that was something in himself. He hesitated very much, while he went on to say, that almost immediately after Tom had left him, he had thought of a way in which he might earn a little money, but that it was a very painful way, and that it was his great unwillingness to try it that grieved him so much. He had heard his brother say some days before, that an old man, Mr Stewart, who had a large garden in the outskirts of the town, had been at their shop getting some of his tools repaired, and had been complaining, that from the number of manufactories in the town employing all the boys, he found it impossible to get a decent, honest lad, to help him in the care of a little

stall he always kept in summer for selling his fruit. 'Now,' said James, 'I could do that very well; for I can write a pretty good hand, and so could keep his accounts for him, and I know Mr Stewart would trust me, he knows father so well. But,'—here poor James coloured very much, and his voice shook,—'I know it is very wrong, but I cannot help feeling that people would laugh at me, and bad boys might tease me, and, indeed, I feel as if I could not stand it.'

"Before Mrs Campbell had time to reply, Mrs Scott came in; and James whispered to her that he would not plague his mother about it until he had made up his own mind. Mrs Campbell soon left them, but not before she had time to observe the kindness with which James listened to and encouraged the children's little histories of all they had seen, at a time when she knew his heart was very full. She went back to see him next day; she had thought much of him, and had tried to devise some plan for his employing himself, that would be less painful than the one he had spoken of; but neither she nor Mr Campbell had been able to form any. They could not think, however, that all he would get for such a service could make it worth the effort it must cost him. And she therefore felt glad to perceive many objections to the

plan, such as might satisfy James that it was quite right for him to give it up.

"She found him much more cheerful. His mother was at home; but being busy at the other end of the room, they could converse without interruption. She told him all her objections, such as the danger of his taking cold from sitting still all day, or of an accident happening to him from horses, carriages, &c., unable as he would be, to get out of the way; and lastly, that as he could move no part of his body but his arms, she did not understand how he could be of any use in selling fruit.

"James smiled quietly, and shook his head as he said, 'that he was very glad Mrs Campbell had not had time to tell him all these objections the day before; for that then, he felt so very unwilling to expose himself to the observation and laughter of strangers, that he would have eagerly seized on any objection that was at all sufficient to quiet his conscience. He had no time all the afternoon to think over the matter, but when all were quiet in bed he had thought a great deal about it. He felt it was his duty to do what he could to help his father and mother; and that even though his plan should be found impossible, yet it was wrong in him to indulge the feeling of aversion to it.'

"James had read a great deal during the six long years he had been confined to bed, and his naturally good understanding had been improved and cultivated to a degree seldom found among boys much older than he then was. Added to this, his simple, single-hearted desire to discover his heavenly Father's will, *in order to do it*, gave him a great advantage in finding out the right and wrong of any matter, by clearing his mind of all the false reasonings by which our inclinations so often blind us. In the present instance, his soundness and clearness of judgment were very strikingly displayed.

"'He found,' he said, 'that it was of no use his beginning to think about the *objections* to his plan, before he had overcome his own great unwillingness, for he knew it was so strong that it would make him judge unfairly; and he therefore set himself first of all to seek help from God to overcome this reluctance, and strength to put himself simply in God's hands, and to be willing to do what was right. He then thought steadily of all the reasons that made it his duty to do everything he could to help his hard-working father and mother, and recalled to mind all their kindness to him; after which he found he might safely begin to think about the objections.

"'There was no danger of either accident or cold,'

he said; 'for it was not an open stall, but had sides and a back, and it was in a corner where there was no danger from carriages.' Then, as to his being able for it, he said, 'that since his illness, he had been able to lift himself a very little, though his legs remained quite helpless.

"'I could have my baskets of fruit here,' he said, raising a pretty heavy book from his book-shelf, and lifting it over to the other side of the bed; 'you see, I could lift them quite well. Besides, Mr Stewart is generally in the stall himself, he only wants a boy to keep his accounts, and to be able to serve the people if he were called away for a few minutes. In short, if you approve, ma'am, I am quite determined to try at least.'

"Mrs Campbell, seeing he had made up his mind, and feeling that he was quite right in thinking that it was his duty to do everything he could for his family, set herself at once to remove any difficulties that might stand in his way. She undertook to persuade his father and mother to give their consent, and she went that very day to speak to the old gardener. Mr Stewart hesitated a good deal about it; he knew, he said, that it would be impossible for him to get a more honest lad, but he was very much afraid he would not be of much use; and when he was obliged

to leave him alone in the stall, any of the wild, mischievous children in the neighbourhood might come and run away with the fruit, and James would be unable to prevent them. Mrs Campbell urged that there were so many people passing the place at all hours of the day, to whom James could appeal for help were anything of that kind to occur; at any rate, as Mr Stewart could get no one else, it would be worth while to try him for a little, and if he found it did not do, he could easily give it up. To this the old man consented; and he promised Mrs Campbell that he would be very kind to the poor boy, and try to screen him from notice as much as possible. She found more difficulty in gaining Mr and Mrs Scott's consent. They thought he would find it so unpleasant; but she at last persuaded them too to allow him to try it at least, and had the satisfaction, before returning home, to see his father begin to make a little cart, in which they were to draw James to the stall. She was very anxious to get everything settled at once, as she knew that, having resolved upon doing what he felt was a very painful duty, it would be vexatious for him to be kept long from beginning. As she went home that day, she acknowledged to herself that she had received another lesson from her *poor* little friend; that in considering about the right

and wrong of anything we feel very unwilling to do, the easiest and safest plan is to *begin* our consideration by prayer for help to overcome our reluctance to what *may* be our duty, and then to consider all the reasons *for* it, before we allow ourselves to think about those *against* it. And often, she said, both in great and little things, she had profited by James's smiling remark, 'I was not much afraid, ma'am, of forgetting any of the objections to my doing what I disliked so much; but if I had begun with thinking about them, I am afraid I should have forgotten many a good reason for it.'

"For the first few days, he found his occupation as great a trial as he expected; every one who came for fruit, and even those who only passed by, stared at the poor deformed boy, and he told Mrs Campbell that he had thought he could not bear the feelings of desolation and shame that came upon him when his brother left him alone the first morning, and he saw none but strangers, who did not know about him or care for him, and all looking at him with so much astonishment, and going away, as he fancied, to tell others to go to Mr Stewart's stall, and they would see such a poor deformed object.

"'Indeed, ma'am, it was much worse than I had expected; and I did not think I could ever look up or

speak to any one. But Mr Stewart is very kind,—and —I suppose the people—will—get used to me.'

"His quivering lips, and the tears, that not all his efforts could keep down, as he said this, showed her, that hard as he had found it to make up his mind to begin at all, he had a harder struggle still to keep himself from giving it up.

"Afterwards, when, as he said, people began to get accustomed to him, and many of them to feel much interested in the poor helpless boy, who sat there all day looking so contented, and always so quiet and patient, even when other boys laughed at and tried to tease him; then, when he no longer felt it so hard a trial, he used to tell her how very sore it had been to him at first,—how the feeling that people were staring at him used to haunt him in his dreams, and every night he fancied he was in the middle of a great crowd of people, who all stared, and pointed at, and spoke about him; and when he looked round for some one to pity or hide him, he could never see anything but hundreds of faces full of wonder and mockery.

"'Even, ma'am, when I turned my eyes down on the ground, I fancied it opened only to let me see more staring mocking faces.'

"Towards the end of that summer, a very celebrated *surgeon* passing through the town with his family, re-

mained a day, in order to allow the young people to see some of the famous manufactories of ——. They happened to pass the stall, and being attracted by some very fine fruit, stopped to buy. James was alone in the stall at the time, and the kind-hearted surgeon observing his helpless condition, asked him some questions about himself. He was much pleased with his modest, sensible replies, and the gardener coming back increased his interest by his warm praises of his honesty, and his earnest desire to be of use. He told the doctor that he had better go and ask Mr Campbell about him, and he gave him his address, saying to James, as he saw the gentleman turn at once from the direction in which he had been going, into the street that led to Mr Campbell's, 'If that man does anything for you, James, I shall be as glad as if he had given me twenty pounds; for there is not a better lad in all the town than you are.'

"The gentleman came that evening to see James, accompanied by Mrs Campbell, and after a careful examination, he said, he thought that if he had him in Edinburgh, he could do him some good; and though he did not think he would ever recover the use of his legs, yet he believed he might be able to sit up and to walk with crutches. He concluded by inviting him and his mother to go to his house in Edinburgh, say-

ing, that the effort James had made to be of use in circumstances in which most boys would have been contented to have remained idle, well deserved anything he could do for him.

"He also gave him five guineas to help to pay his own and his mother's expenses, and gave her particular directions how to manage the difficult business of getting him conveyed so far. James, after expressing his sincere gratitude, said, that he would not like to leave Mr Stewart, so long as he had any use for him, as he had been so kind in taking him at a time when he did not expect he should ever be of any use at all; and besides, he said, it was his kind praises that made the gentleman ask Mr Campbell about him.

"To this the surgeon replied, that he should be far from wishing to interfere with what James thought was his duty; but that he should expect him in the beginning of winter, when Mr Stewart would not require him.

"This kind gentleman was quite as successful as he had expected. James returned to ——, after being for some months in Edinburgh, quite able to walk with crutches. His legs were still powerless, and at the time I saw him first, he required some one to walk beside him, to give him support sometimes when he *needed it.* He was then, and had been for about a

twelvemonth, acting as bookkeeper in a small shop in ——; but soon after his kind friend the surgeon procured him a situation in London, in one of the largest booksellers' shops there, where he has been ever since. He has a good salary, and has educated all his younger brothers and sisters, helping them to set up in different employments; and his sister Jeanie, who was his kind nurse in his helpless days, and went up with him to take care of him, is now married, and they all live together, the happiest family, your uncle says, he ever saw."

"Is that all?" asked Douglas, eagerly, when his aunt concluded.

"Yes, Douglas. Are you disappointed?" she replied, smiling.

"It is very interesting, aunt; but I had expected him to do something greater—something more uncommon. It does not seem so very difficult to go and sell fruit in a stall."

"Nor was it in selling fruit in a stall that the difficulty lay, but in overcoming that nervous shrinking fear of being laughed at, which in poor James really amounted to a disease. I daresay you cannot understand how he should feel this so much; but the fact of its haunting him in his dreams for weeks, is a proof how very much he really did feel it, and I must say I

think it was a great thing for him to overcome this very strong dislike just because he felt it was his duty to do so."

"Oh, you know, aunt, I think he was a very good boy; but it does not seem to me that there was anything uncommon about him."

"Well, Douglas, I think as you see more of the evil of your own heart, you will be more ready to confess that the unselfishness and the steady straightforward courage and perseverance James displayed in doing his duty, are both very uncommon virtues, and very difficult of attainment. Another thing that I think very uncommon and very admirable in James, was his single-hearted desire to find out what was right, and to do it, without considering himself at all."

"O aunt, you know I do admire him very much, only" ——

"Only you think I admire him too much, Douglas; is that it? Tell me twenty years after this, if we are both alive then, whether you have not changed your mind about this. In the meantime, you know," continued his aunt, smiling, "the more common and easy James's virtues are, the less excuse will you have for not imitating them."

When the children were out in the garden next *morning* before breakfast, they renewed this discus-

sion, Douglas declaring laughingly that he was determined to show his aunt that he was as great a hero as James Scott.

"Look," he said, "how unselfish I am. I am walking next the hedge to allow Eleanor the best side of the walk; and then as to patience, I am sure I showed a great deal last night, in disentangling that mass of confused worsteds."

"Oh yes," replied Eleanor; "we all know that you are the most patient creature in the world, next to Harry at least. I *really* do not believe that you said, 'I wonder what can be keeping that man so long with my pony' oftener than ten times in five minutes yesterday."

The children all laughed, while Douglas replied good-humouredly, "Come, Miss Eleanor, it is too bad in you to be so impertinent to me, when I have such an admiration for you. But, seriously, Allen, do you think it would be *so very* difficult to be patient, unselfish, and contented?"

"Try, Douglas," said Allen; "that is the best way. It is not very difficult for any of us to be contented, because, in general, everything goes on so smoothly. But I think if you try you will not find it so very easy to give up your own wishes, either for the sake of others, or because you see it is right."

"Even about being contented," said Eleanor, "I do not think it is very easy; when little things cross you, or when you have set your mind upon going somewhere, it is very difficult indeed to feel contented if you are disappointed. To-morrow, for instance, Douglas, will you be contented and cheerful if we do not go to the sea-side?"

"Oh, but in little things like that," Douglas said, "it was not worth while to be contented!"

"But mamma says," replied Eleanor, "that people who cannot or do not exercise any virtue on little occasions, have no right to suppose they would on great ones."

"But what I say is, that such little things are not worth making a great effort for," said Douglas.

"Will not a *little* effort do for a *little* thing?" asked Eleanor, laughing.

"But you do not see, Eleanor," replied Douglas, pettedly, "that there is a difference between making a great struggle to do some great thing that everybody admires and respects you for doing, and making a little struggle for a trifle that no one will take any notice of."

"But, Douglas," said Allen, "papa says, that to make a sacrifice, just that people may admire you,

is not a great action at all. It is only denying yourself in one respect to please yourself in another."

"You are the most tiresome creatures in the world to argue with," replied Douglas, impatiently; "you never have anything of your own to say, but always—'Mamma says,' or 'Papa says.'"

Douglas turned away from them as he said this, and walked some steps by himself, when he began to think what it was that made him angry, and saw that it was because they were right and he was wrong.

"I was wrong, Allen," he said, returning to them again. "I see that James would not have done right so constantly if it had only been for praise he did so. Besides, you have forgotten an argument you might have had against me; do you not remember aunt told us that James was as unselfish in little things as in great. Now I am afraid that before I can persuade her to take me for her hero instead of him, I must take care of little things too. So, prepare, Eleanor, to see me very merry to-morrow, even if it should be a snow-storm."

"It would be more likely to be a thunder-storm," said Harry.

CHAPTER VIII.

A VISIT TO THE SEA-SIDE.

NEITHER thunder-storm, snow, nor rain, however, came to prevent the long-wished-for excursion, and the older children, Frank Herbert, and Mr Graham, set off immediately after breakfast, the boys walking, and the girls in the donkey-cart, which was the vehicle best adapted for the roads. Frank Herbert was a merry sailor, about two-and-twenty years old, very fond of all children, particularly of the Grahams, who warmly returned his affection. He entered with great good nature into all their sports, and on the present occasion gave the boys some lessons in climbing trees. Allen and Harry were very good climbers, and Douglas, though inexperienced, was so active and bold, that Frank predicted he would soon equal them.

"I think I shall be a sailor," said Douglas, as he *swung* himself lightly down from a tree, a good deal

elated at his success, and at Frank's praise of his agility.

"I should advise you to think better of it," said Frank, laughing.

"Do you not like being a sailor?" asked several of the children, in tones of surprise and curiosity.

"Yes," Frank said, "I like my profession very much now; but there is both a great deal of wickedness and of hardship that a young midshipman is exposed to, when he first goes to sea, and not one boy in twenty has sufficient firmness of mind and strength of principle to bear it uninjured."

"But you were able to bear it, Frank," said Allen.

"I do not mean to call myself the one boy in twenty," said Frank, laughing, "but I was peculiarly fortunate. My first captain was a great friend of my father's, and a very good man, and he used to look well after me, and help me to remember the principles I had learned at home; besides, from being accustomed to all kinds of country sports, I was more active and bold in climbing, and in any of their wild games, than many boys are; and these are qualities that young midshipmen have a very great respect for. I am naturally inclined, too, to be merry, and to look on the bright side of things, so that though I often felt melancholy, when I had time to think about home, yet I

could always enjoy any fun or amusement that was going on."

"I think we should be very well fitted to be sailors, too," said Douglas, conceitedly; "you say we are both active and bold."

"In these things," said Frank, with an emphasis on the word *these*, "you might do very well for a sailor."

Douglas asked in what things he would not do for a sailor, but Frank did not appear to hear his question. He had turned to the girls, to tell them about a poor boy who had gone to be a midshipman in the same ship, and nearly at the same time as he did. "He was an only child, had been very much indulged at home, had never learned to bear the least hardship or contradiction, but had always been the first object of attention and interest to every one about him. Being naturally of a timid, quiet disposition, with a great deal of indolence and dislike to all exertion, he was very miserable. When the boys laughed at him and teased him, he used to give way to tears at once; and then, when he found there was no one to care whether he cried or not, that made him more wretched still. He used to go and sit by himself, whenever he could, and think over all his hardships, contrasting his present situation with what he had been accustomed to, with a kind father and mother to care for him. The

quick, sharp way of the superior officers, in giving an order, frightened him; and as to going up the masts, I do not think you girls could have been more nervous than he was. I used to try to cheer him, and to persuade him to exert himself a little; for I had parted from kind friends so lately myself, that I felt really sorry for him. But it was of no use; he had no energy of mind, and he actually fretted himself into ill health."

"What could induce such a boy to go to sea?" Mr Graham asked.

Frank said "that his father had died, and his guardian, who was a rough, stern man, thinking that he had been too much indulged already, and that if he were left under his mother's charge he would be totally ruined, had insisted on sending him to sea. Poor fellow, I do not think he would ever be of much use to any one."

"What a pretty squirrel!" said Alice, as one just at that moment ran across the road.

"A squirrel, Alice!" repeated Douglas, contemptuously; "it is a rabbit. Where did you ever see a squirrel on the ground? do you not know they are always in the trees?"

"Indeed, Douglas," said his uncle, pointing to the squirrel, which had run up a tree close beside him,

"since you know so much about rabbits, will you be so good as to tell me the name of that very singular species, for I must say I never saw one like it before."

Douglas could not endure to be laughed at; and when all the Grahams and Frank laughed at Mr Graham's serious tone in saying this, he got quite cross and petted, saying, "he did not see anything so very absurd in a person mistaking a squirrel for a rabbit."

"Nay, Douglas," said Mr Graham, "you might bear the laugh patiently, for you provoked it yourself by your contempt of Alice, when, as it turned out, she was quite correct."

Douglas could not but see the truth of this, and he tried to recover his good-humour again. When he had nearly succeeded in overcoming his pet, Frank said,

"You asked me, Douglas, a little while ago, in what respects you were ill-adapted to be a sailor? You will be now more convinced I am correct, in saying that you would require more power of bearing and forbearing before you could get well over the teasing you would meet with. None of your companions would submit to your tone of contemptuous superiority, while you would often have to bear being laughed at, not *only* when you made a mistake as you did just now,

but even when you were quite right, but had no means of proving it."

"But that is very unfair," said Douglas, "I do not see why I should submit to be laughed at when I am right."

"Just because if you do not, if you lose your temper, as you did just now, they will only laugh at and tease you the more. When a great many wild boys are together, they do not stop to think of the fairness or unfairness of anything that gives them amusement; and unless you had learned to take little unfair things good-humouredly, you would never get on. You would require to learn to be satisfied with being in the right, without being always able to convince others that you are so."

"I do not think I could ever learn that," said Douglas.

"Oh yes, you could," replied Frank; "and you should try to do it, even though you are not going to be a sailor; for all boys and girls too," he said, smiling to the girls, "are much the better of getting a large store of good-humour, to enable them to bear little injuries and provocations patiently."

"You were asking me about Sir Andrew Gray the other day," said Mr Graham. "This was his misfortune; he never learned to submit patiently to little

offences. He was not at all ill-tempered as a boy, but only very tenacious of what he considered his rights; and he had no sensible friend to teach him, that in many cases, it is really wiser for our own happiness, taking no higher ground, to give up what is our right, than to dispute, vex ourselves, and lose our temper, about what is of little moment. When he went to school he was continually quarrelling with some of his companions about little things; and though naturally generous, and kind-hearted enough to have given up his own will in almost any case where it was looked upon as a favour, he yet was so exceedingly sensitive about any attempt to deprive him of what he considered his due, that he came to be universally disliked. This also he considered great injustice, for he saw boys liked, who, he knew, had not nearly so much generosity as he had, but who could stand provocation better. It was the same when he went to college; his propensity to look upon every trifle as a premeditated offence, grew to such a height that no one would associate with him. And now, his temper is so much soured, that no one can live with him except his youngest daughter, who has been taught by religion that it is her duty to bear with his bad temper, and who does so with a sweetness that nothing but religion can teach, and that

the Holy Spirit alone can give her strength for. He had two very fine boys, generous, kind-hearted lads, but hot and quick-tempered like himself; and as they grew up to be men, they could not bear their father's perpetually taking offence, and his ill-humour, and he has not seen them for years. His temper is now really a disease, and beyond his own power to control."

"Uncle," said Douglas, thoughtfully, "do you think there is any danger of my becoming like Sir Andrew Gray?"

"Not if you see your danger, and try now, while it is comparatively easy, to subdue that proneness to take offence, which I think you must know you have. I think all you three require to learn to give way good-humouredly even when you are in the right."

"I am sure, uncle," said Douglas, "Allen does not easily take offence, or lose his temper."

"No, I do not think he does," replied Mr Graham; "but, in arguing with you, I observe he often goes on pressing his point, even after he sees you are getting angry. He keeps his own temper very well, but he would do better if he gave up the point, even when he is right, rather than make you angry. Is it not so, Allen?"

"Yes, papa," said Allen, colouring; "but you know it is very difficult, when you are right."

"I acknowledge it is, Allen," said Mr Graham; "but it is seldom about a point of importance sufficient to excuse your tempting the others to do wrong by getting cross."

At this moment they had reached a turn of the road which gave Alice her first good view of the sea, and they stood still for a few moments to allow her to enjoy it. She said it was very grand, much grander than she had imagined from the peep she had got before. The sight of the beautiful deep blue sea, and the numerous fishing boats with their sails shining in the sun, raised the spirits of our little party even higher than they had been before. Alice was the only one who was silent and grave, and amid the talking and laughing of the others, her silence was unobserved. She had never thought of this excursion with so much glee as the others did, though she had tried to persuade herself that she would like what they all expected to enjoy so much, yet from the time she had heard it proposed that they should go out in a boat, she had felt more fear than pleasure. And now as they went slowly down the hill she looked at the sea, and called to mind all the dismal stories she had ever heard, of boats being upset, or vessels being lost. When they came to the shore they found the water very smooth, and so

clear, and so blue, that the little Grahams and Douglas could not find words to express their anticipations of pleasure.

Frank, lest they should be disappointed in getting a boat, had gone the day before and engaged an old fisherman, who used to be a friend of his and his brother's; and now he was waiting for them with his boat all ready, looking so glad to see them, and so anxious that they should enjoy themselves.

"I see old John has put up his sail, Frank; did you intend that?" asked Mr Graham.

"It is much pleasanter sailing," said Frank, "only rowing is the safest; but on a day like this there can be no danger at all. However, we will ask old John."

Alice heard this, and it increased her fears; she felt so nervous that she would at once have asked to remain on shore, if she had not been ashamed of being frightened when the others were so happy. Old John thought they would be much the better of the sail; they would go before the wind as far as they felt inclined, and then row back again. Both Mr Graham and Frank agreed, and the children were handed in, and told where they were to sit; Frank giving them many injunctions to sit still, though, he said, they might talk as much as they pleased.

"And laugh too, I hope," said Harry.

"Oh yes," said old John; "laugh away, my little master, the more the better."

Mr Graham was the only one who had observed Alice's uneasiness, and he took no notice of it, wishing her to get the better of her foolish fears, and hoping that the confidence and mirth of the others would reassure her. As they turned from the land, however, the wind, slight as it was, came on the side of the boat, and made it for a minute or two incline a little to one side. Alice could no longer control herself, and she begged so piteously to be allowed to land, that her uncle asked old John to turn back and put her on shore.

"I leave this riotous party in your charge, Frank," said Mr Graham; "and I hope you will not allow them to tease either old John or yourself too much."

"No fear of their teasing me," said old John; "but if it is the sail that frightens Miss, we will take it down and use our oars instead."

Alice felt relieved to hear her uncle decline this offer, though she was sorry to see he looked grave; and after they had gone ashore, and watched the boat set off again, and sail merrily and smoothly away before the wind, she looked a little anxiously in his face to see if he were really displeased with her. She

thought he was, he looked so grave, and did not speak in his usual merry way; but after saying they would find a comfortable seat upon the rocks a little farther on, where they might watch the party for some time, he walked on in silence, and even when they were seated did not seem inclined to speak.

"Are you angry with me, uncle?" she asked, timidly.

"I am much vexed, dear Alice," he said kindly, but gravely, "to see that you make no effort to overcome your foolish cowardice."

"Indeed, dear uncle, I am very sorry, but I cannot help it."

"Do not allow yourself to think that, Alice, or you will never improve. Let us reason a little about your fears to-day, and see if we may not be able to overcome them another time. What alarmed you?"

"I think, uncle, it was hearing you ask Mr Herbert if it would be safe to go out with the sail up."

"Think again, my little girl," said her uncle, smiling, "I did not ask Frank that; I only asked if he had intended John to put it up; besides, you were looking anxious before that."

Alice could not deny that she had felt afraid, a little afraid, all day, but hearing her uncle say this had made her much worse.

"Did you not, then, hear Frank and John say there was no danger?"

"Yes," said Alice, "but" —— and she hesitated.

"But you did not believe them. My dear girl, consider how silly this is. Even although Frank and John had no regard for our safety, do you think they would wilfully endanger their own lives, and endanger them so needlessly?"

"I did not think they would do it, uncle, if they thought there was danger; but they might forget —— they might not think" —— and again she hesitated.

"Then, you must have supposed that you, a little girl who never saw the sea before, knew better, or were more prudent and thoughtful than either Frank or John, both sailors by profession. Do you not see the absurdity of that?"

"Oh but, uncle," said Alice, laughing, "I did not think that."

"My dear Alice, if they tell you it is quite safe, and you do not believe them, it must be either because you think they mean to deceive you, or because you think you know better than they do."

Alice was silent, and her uncle continued:

"I wish much you would try to reason yourself out of this foolish timidity. Do you remember on Tues-

day, when we were coming home from the manse, at that narrow part of the road where we met a gig coming very fast, you put out your hands to the reins, as if you thought I did not know how to drive?"

"O uncle," said Alice, laughing.

"It seems very absurd to say you think this, but is it not true, Alice? You should try to remember, in a case like this, that I am quite as anxious to keep the gig from being upset as you are, and that I must know better than you can possibly do how to prevent it. It is difficult, I confess, to overcome our fear in cases where our very ignorance makes us see danger when there is none. But then, we must trust to those who do know. I knew a young lady who, like you, gave way to every foolish fear, without making the least effort to reason about it. One day, when she was driving in her carriage through a very narrow street, some slight accident alarmed her, and her loud screams so startled the horses that they became quite unmanageable, ran away, and the carriage was overturned. She was not hurt, but the coachman was so severely injured that he died in a few hours; and she had the great pain of hearing him say, 'O ma'am, why did you scream? you have killed me.'"

"O uncle, how sorry she would be!"

"She was, Alice, and reproached herself much for

her folly on this occasion; but she did not see that it was her having indulged herself in the habit of giving way to her alarms in the merest trifles, which made her quite incapable of controlling herself when there was real danger. Now I should like you to take warning by this melancholy accident, and try to reason yourself out of your cowardice."

"I will try, uncle," said Alice; "indeed I will, for I think if I had been that young lady, I should never have been happy again."

"There are other kinds of danger, where it is not men you have to trust in but God, and in these cases I think, my little girl, your want of trust even sinful."

Alice looked up, and said in a very low voice, "I will try in these things, too, to trust."

"Do, my dear Alice, and do not only try, but pray to God for strength to enable you to trust, and believe that He will give you what you ask, for He has promised it. Some women have naturally much more courage than others, but it is every one's duty to try to acquire a certain portion. As I have told you of one lady for a warning, I will tell you of another for an encouragement—of a lady who, when she was your age, was as timid as you are, but who, having been convinced of the folly and sinfulness of her fears, is *now more* composed in circumstances of real danger,

and more free from imaginary terror, than any one I ever saw."

"O uncle," said Alice, eagerly, "I should like to know that lady. Do you think I shall ever see her?"

Her uncle laughed; "You see her every day, my dear Alice."

"Do you mean my aunt?"

"I do; she was once as easily frightened as you are."

Alice sighed, and then said, smiling, "I am a little sorry that it is aunt you mean, uncle. When you first told me I was very hopeful."

"And how does it make you feel less hopeful to know it is your aunt?"

"Oh, because, uncle, she is so clever, so sensible, and so good, it does not seem wonderful that she should be able to conquer such a bad habit. But it is quite different in my case: I am so stupid, and have so little strength of mind."

"Come, come, Alice," interrupted her uncle, laughing, "I will allow no one, not even you, to call my niece either stupid or weak-minded. My dear Alice," he continued more seriously, "you have too long accustomed yourself to think that you cannot do what other people can. Instead of saying, 'I am not nearly so clever or so sensible as aunt, so I shall never be

able to get the better of my fears as she has done,' just determine to do your very utmost to get a little more courage. And begin at once; as we are going up the hill this afternoon, do not allow yourself to be afraid that the donkey will stumble; or, at that narrow part of the road where you grew so pale as we were coming down, assure yourself that if there were the very least danger, I would not allow you to go. You will try this, my dear little Alice, and without thinking whether you can ever be as courageous as my girls are, set yourself to be as courageous as possible to-day in these little things, and the habit will come in time."

"I will try, uncle," said Alice; "and I will try to get a little more courage in other things too. I mean, that in endeavouring to overcome any bad habit, or to learn any difficult lesson, I will determine to do just as much as I can, instead of despairing about it. You know yesterday, uncle, about that sum; when you gave it me to do I thought it was so difficult it would be impossible for me ever to do it, and I was so busy thinking this, that there was no room for any thoughts about how it should be done, and so I did not even begin it, though I could certainly have done the first part if I had tried."

"I am particularly glad to hear you say so, Alice;

for I am quite sure that when you get rid of your bad habit of despairing, you will find you are not so very stupid as you imagine; and it is an excellent rule for you to make, always to begin and go on as far as you can, instead of thinking that because you cannot do all, it is not worth while to do anything."

"You are such a kind uncle," said Alice. "When I was with my aunt, she used to scold me, and say I was so stupid, instead of helping me nicely as you do. I am sure if she had been here to-day"——

"Alice," said her uncle, interrupting her, "I do not like you to tell me anything about your aunt that seems like blaming her. She might not always be very judicious in her management of you, but you were given into her charge by your papa, and I should not like you to accustom yourself to think, much less to speak, disrespectfully of her. Don't you think it would be a good plan for us to occupy ourselves now in gathering some of these pretty shells and pebbles to ornament your house with when you build it?"

They were so busily employed with this that they never saw the boat, until a loud shout from the children as they approached the shore made them look up. They had had a delightful sail, and the boys had been learning to row in their way back. Frank gave

a very favourable report of their behaviour, and old John hoped they would come again very soon, for he said, "they were the merriest little Masters and Misses he ever saw;" he added, "that next time they would row all the way, and then the frightened Miss might go too."

"You need not take down your sail for me," said Alice; "for I am determined, at least I hope never to be 'the frightened Miss' again."

They talked a good deal about Sir Andrew Gray and his daughter on their way home. Eleanor asked Mr Graham if he did not think that she was right in saying Miss Gray had an almost sad and yet a happy expression; adding that Douglas laughed at her for saying so.

Mr Graham replied, "that Douglas might perhaps have understood her better if she had said *peaceful* instead of *happy*." And then, turning to Frank, they talked for some time about the beautiful way in which she bore her father's temper, mentioning several instances they had heard, in which she had preserved what Mr Graham called her "meek and quiet spirit," under provocations that seemed almost incredible.

Alice said, "It did not seem so very extraordinary to her, because she thought if she were in her place,

she should be too frightened to do anything but submit."

"Miss Gray," Frank said, "was of a different character from Alice. She was naturally high-spirited and quick-tempered, and," he said, "his father often mentioned her as one of the most remarkable instances of religion softening the temper. She had often proved that her submission was not produced by fear; for when it was in her power to prevent her father from committing an unjust action, she would oppose him with the utmost firmness, and brave all his wildest storms of passion."

The children were much interested in all the anecdotes they heard, and Eleanor said she was sure she could never submit as Miss Gray did, to all Sir Andrew's crossness; and that even if she were able to remain quiet and meek, yet the constant effort, and the living in that large gloomy house alone with such an ill-tempered person, would make her miserable, and she could never be so peaceful as Miss Gray seemed to be.

Mr Graham said, "he hoped his Eleanor would never be placed in such a situation; but he hoped still more earnestly, that she might find that perfect peace *that springs* from a sense of God's love to her

in Christ; from a sense of His continual presence and sympathy in all her afflictions, and if she did find that, then she would be as happy as Miss Gray, even in as melancholy a situation. For," he concluded, "that is a peace with which outward circumstances have nothing to do."

CHAPTER IX.

THE HAMPER OF PLANTS.

THEY received a very joyful piece of intelligence on their return home, namely, that Mrs Dickson had been paying a visit to her son, little Maggie's father, who was a gardener, and had brought Harry a large hamper full of plants. They had no time to inspect or unpack it before dinner, but settled they would go out immediately after.

Mr Graham asked mamma if she knew whether they had been well packed or not, if it would do them any harm to leave them as they were till the next day.

Mrs Graham said, "Mrs Dickson had particularly mentioned that her son had packed them so carefully that they could not be injured by being left as they were for one or even two days, if Master Harry were away from home."

"Oh, but, papa," said Harry, eagerly, "you are not going to bid us *wait till* to-morrow?"

"I am certainly not going to *bid* you wait, Harry," said Mr Graham; "but I must say I would *advise* you to do so."

"O papa, I do not think we could make up our minds to wait," said Allen. "Only consider," he continued, laughing, "how anxious we must be to see what there is, and to settle where to put them."

"I do consider, Allen," said Mr Graham; "and it is because I know it will be so difficult, that I have not positively desired you to do it. But I will tell you my reasons, and you shall then decide what you will do. You know that in consequence of to-day's idleness, you have all more lessons than usual to prepare to-night, and more than you can accomplish before tea. Then you, Allen, promised to write to George Lindsey, and the little girls to finish their frocks to-night. Now I am sure it will be quite impossible for you to fulfil these promises if you unpack your plants before you begin your lessons."

"It would not take us long, papa," said Harry, sullenly, "not five minutes."

"A little more than five minutes, Harry," said his papa, smiling and shaking his head. "You must first carry your hamper to the garden, then unpack it, and even if the temptation of staying to settle where you *will put* your plants is not too strong for you, yet the

putting them away in your tool-house must take a good while."

The children were silent. It was quite evident they were much disappointed, and yet they could not help seeing the force of Mr Graham's reasons.

"I do think, Harry," said Allen, at last, "that we should wait till after our lessons are all over, and till we have fulfilled our promises."

"Oh," said Harry, very crossly, "if you wait for that we shall have no time."

No one reminded Harry that if they had not time *after* their lessons, they would not have time *before* either. For both Mr and Mrs Graham felt that it was a trial to the children to wait so long, and they did not irritate Harry by taking notice of his false reasoning. There was another long pause, and then Douglas said,

"You see, Harry, we might be tempted, as uncle says, to stay too long, and then he would be much displeased if our lessons were not properly prepared, after giving us so much pleasure to-day."

"Oh, you can do as you like," said Harry; "but that is just the way, whenever I set my heart upon any pleasure, you all try to prevent my having it."

"I am sure it is as great a disappointment to us all as it is to you," said Douglas, angrily; but Harry had left the room, and did not hear him.

"So it is, Douglas," replied Mrs Graham; "but your tempers are not so much affected by it as Harry's is. So you will, I am sure, take care to avoid giving him any provocation, and even if he should be a little unreasonable, you will try to bear with him."

"It will be a good opportunity for exercising that power of bearing injuries and little injustices that we were speaking of to-day," said Mr Graham, smiling.

"I will try," said Douglas; "but I will not promise to keep my temper if Harry is *very* unreasonable."

"Try, at least," said Mrs Graham. "If you have more lessons than usual to-night, would you like me to put off tea for an hour? I think it is disagreeable to be interrupted in the middle of your occupations."

"And I think," said Allen, "that you are a very considerate mamma, and that we may well do our utmost to please you, when you think so much about our little troubles?"

"I suppose, then," said Mrs Graham, smiling, "that that compliment means that you would like to accept my offer."

"If you please, mamma, if papa does not object," said Eleanor.

Mr Graham laughed, "I should not venture to object," he said; "if I did, you would make disagreeable comparisons between mamma and me."

As they were going to the study, Douglas told Eleanor he would put himself under her charge to keep him in a good temper.

"Oh, we will all try very hard," said Allen. "I am really sorry for Harry; until he gets the better of it, the uncomfortable feeling of having lost his temper will only make him the more cross."

They found Harry busy in the study, and it was well they had resolved to bear with him, for he certainly was very unreasonable. Now, he said one had purposely shaken the table when he was writing,—then, that another had put the atlas above one of his books, and kept him a quarter of an hour looking for it. Poor Harry, his ideas of time were certainly very confused to-night; for this quarter of an hour was not the fifth part of the five minutes he had said would be sufficient for unpacking the hamper. Douglas was only once very near losing his temper. He had finished all his lessons but geography, and was just reaching out his hand for the atlas when Harry took it. He asked him, as he had not done his sum yet, if he would do that first, and let him have the atlas.

"Why cannot you do your sum first?" was Harry's rude answer.

And upon Douglas obliging himself to reply in a pleasant tone, that he had finished all his other lessons,

Harry pushed the atlas across the table to him very sulkily, muttering, "It was very provoking. He hated to do his sum before his geography." Douglas was just going to push it back again in the same way, and tell him if he chose to be so cross he would not be obliged to him for anything, when Eleanor, who sat beside him, stopped him, asking him to explain part of her lesson to her. Douglas did so, whispering, as he recovered his good-humour, "That is all a pretence, Eleanor; you know this as well as I do. But I am not going to lose my temper now."

By tea-time they had all finished their lessons but Harry, and they felt happier and lighter-hearted than they would have done, even if they had not had their disappointment. This arose from the satisfaction they felt in having been able to gain a victory over themselves, even in such small matters as putting off unpacking the hamper, and being able to keep their temper under provocation.

Harry alone felt unhappy and wearied. He would not come to tea, for he said that if he did, he should not get his difficult sum finished before bed-time. His mind had been so full of his disappointment and of the uncomfortable feelings that ill-temper always causes, that he had been longer at his lessons than *any of them*, and had besides the conviction that

none of them were properly prepared. He was quite unable to find out the way of doing his sum, and after working till his hand trembled, so that he could scarcely put down the figures, and his face was flushed, and his head ached, he put down his pencil, and laying his head upon his slate, he burst into tears. In a minute or two he heard some one come in; he did not look up till his mamma sat down beside him, and he heard her kind voice saying, "What is the matter with my dear Harry?"

"O mamma, I cannot do this sum; my lessons are not properly learned, and I know papa will be angry to-morrow, if I cannot say them."

"But I think it is not very like a brave boy to cry about it," said Mrs Graham in a pleasant tone, "instead of trying to do his best. Let me see this sum."

Harry showed it to her.

"It does not seem so *very* difficult, Harry; not nearly so difficult as this one that papa said you did so well and quickly yesterday."

"No, mamma," said Harry, hesitatingly; "but then I have been thinking of so many things — about my other lessons not being well enough learned — about papa being displeased." And Harry looked as if he were going to begin to cry again.

"We will not think about papa being displeased,"

said Mrs Graham, "until we are quite sure that these imperfect lessons cannot even yet be better learned. And we will not even think of this difficult sum until these hot hands and face get a little cooler. It still wants an hour of bed-time, let us go on the lawn, and try to empty your mind of the thoughts that have been filling it, and then we will come in and do this sum."

"Oh no, mamma," said Harry, despondingly; "indeed it will take me the whole hour to finish it."

"Try my plan to-night," said his mamma, with a kind smile; "and I think you will find you can do more in half-an-hour, when you can give *all* your mind to it, than in a whole hour with only half your mind."

Harry agreed, though a little unwillingly, and they went out. It was a lovely evening, and the blackbirds and thrushes were singing very sweetly. Harry found, as he walked silently beside his mamma, listening to their songs and to the peaceful cooing of the wood-pigeons, that his feverish unhappy feeling was going away; and when his mamma, after they had walked backwards and forwards two or three times, said to him, "Do you think you can tell me now, Harry, what made you so unhappy to-night?" *he could* return her smile, as he replied,

"You know, mamma, I was much disappointed about the hamper first, then the thinking about it prevented me from learning my lessons rightly, and thinking about them prevented my being able to do my sum."

"My dear little Harry," said Mrs Graham, "it could not be your disappointment alone that began your troubles, for the others were disappointed too, and they are happier than usual to-night. Can you bear to hear what was the first cause which made the difference between you and them?"

"I can bear it now, mamma," said Harry, looking up and colouring; "before I came out here I felt very cross, but I am much better now."

"Then, Harry, I think it was because you allowed your mind to rest so much on the pleasure you would lose, that you did not allow the sense of duty to exert any influence over you. You could not deny the truth of Allen and Douglas's arguments, and felt cross and irritated against them for convincing you so much against your will. They, on the contrary, thought most of what was right to do, and therefore, when they decided to give up their pleasure, they had the comfort of feeling that they had done right, to help them to bear their disappointment."

"Mamma," said Harry, "that is what papa says

of me, that I think too much of what I *like* to do, and not enough of what I *ought* to do."

"Yes, dear Harry, I do think that has been your fault to-night. Had you exerted a little command over yourself at first, you too would have had the pleasant feeling that you had gained a conquest over yourself, to counterbalance the pain of your disappointment. Then, Harry, when you came to your lessons, did you not still think more about the pleasure you had lost than about the reasons that made it right for you to give it up?"

Harry could not deny this, and Mrs Graham continued—

"It was this that made you feel cross and unreasonable towards the others; they did not tell me you were so, but I judge by experience when I say you would be."

"By experience, mamma?" said Harry, looking up.

"Yes, Harry, I know by experience, that when any one indulges in that disappointed, discontented feeling, without trying to overcome it, it makes them cross and unreasonable to everybody around them."

"Do you mean that you have ever felt that discontented, unreasonable feeling, mamma?"

"*Yes*, Harry; I remember once when I was just

about your age, losing a whole day's pleasure by giving way to that feeling."

"I should like to hear about that, mamma."

"Not just now, Harry dear; we shall not have time."

"Tell me, at least, how you got the better of it."

"I came to see," replied Mrs Graham, "that it was a very wrong feeling in itself, and besides, led me into the sins of losing my temper, and being inattentive and idle; so I tried to get the better of the very first beginnings of it, asking God to help me; and I found it was a good plan to do as I advised you, namely, to think more about the good reasons for giving up the pleasure than about the pleasure itself. And now, I think, Harry, we must go in and try this difficult sum."

Harry sighed as they turned towards the house.

"Oh," said Mrs Graham, laughing, "you must not sigh so deeply, Harry, or lose courage about your sum; for if you do, you will think so much about its being very difficult, that you will not be able to think about how you are to set about it."

"It is not only my sum being difficult, mamma, that makes me sigh, but thinking about all my ill-prepared lessons, and you know I have no time to prepare them better to-night."

"Perhaps not to-night, Harry; but why not rise an hour earlier to-morrow morning? Do your utmost, my boy, to repair your fault; if you do not succeed, you must tell papa candidly that you have been wrong, and submit then to his displeasure; but do not think of it now, so as to unfit you for making any exertion."

Mrs Graham sat down beside her little boy, helped him to find out the principle upon which the sum was done, and Harry found it was by no means so very difficult; he finished it, and his mamma said it was quite right.

"Now," he said, and in spite of his resolution he sighed again, "I must learn my geography."

"It is so near bed-time, Harry, that tired as you are, you will be able to do very little to-night. I would rather advise you to put away your books and come up-stairs with me to the drawing-room. Papa and the others are sorry to think of you as being still unhappy and discontented. Let us join them, and try to look cheerful for their sakes."

Harry found it a little difficult to be cheerful and happy, when he went up-stairs, for though much better, he was still tired, and could not but feel unhappy as often as he remembered how much he should have *to do the* next morning. But all in the drawing-room

were so glad to see him, and seemed so anxious to make amends to him for his unhappy evening, that his heart was quite softened, and he at once apologised to them for all his crossness. The little effort necessary to do this, and the seeing that his mamma and papa were pleased he had done it, restored him to a good measure of his usual cheerfulness.

Mrs Graham was so anxious about his being up in time, that she went herself to call him the next morning. Harry felt that this kindness was an additional motive to him to do his utmost to prepare his lessons properly: and he did exert himself so much, that he was able to join the others before they had more than half finished their morning's occupation of feeding their pets and cleaning their houses. His lessons were well said too, so that his spirits had quite risen to their usual pitch by the time they went, after luncheon, to unpack the important hamper. Mr and Mrs Graham were detained by visitors for about half an hour after the children, and when they joined them, they found them at the tool-house surrounded by flower-pots of all sizes.

"O mamma! O papa!" they cried, "we have got such beautiful plants; geraniums, fuschias, petunias, carnations, and pinks, some plants of the fine double wall-flower, a white Provençe rose-tree, a moss rose-

de-Meaux, some dwarf China roses; and, O mamma, look what a bundle of German stocks!"

"I was desired to tell you," said Mrs Graham, "that the rose-trees had been potted early in spring, and that if you water them well, so as to make the earth adhere to their roots, you may plant them out whenever you like."

"We are going to make a bed of stocks and another of carnations and pinks here, and the other plants we will put up and down in the borders."

"That is a good plan, Harry," said Mr Graham, "but I would advise you to dig a little sand and leaf mould into this bed."

"Yes, papa, it would be better," said Allen, hesitatingly; "but then, if we do that, we shall not have time to put in the plants before dinner."

"If mamma does not object to lose her walk, I will stay and help you," said Mr Graham.

So far from objecting, Mrs Graham said she should be very happy to assist; and though she could not be of much use in putting in the plants, yet she could hold them straight for the more experienced to put them in.



CHAPTER X.

THE WOOD-HOUSE.

SOME weeks passed by very quietly. It was such hot weather that the children were not able to take long walks in the forenoon. Sometimes the boys and papa, who were not so easily tired with the heat, took long rides, while the girls remained at home, either working in the shady parts of their garden, or sitting under the trees with mamma, working and reading aloud. Two events happened about this time which vexed our little party a good deal. One was the Lindseys being obliged to go to England for change of air after the hooping-cough; and the other was the gipsy's leaving them to rejoin her friends. She remained with them for some weeks, and appeared very grateful to the Herberts and Grahams for all their kindness to her, and listened most attentively to Mrs Herbert's instructions. Mrs Her-

bert did not begin by trying to convince her of the sinfulness of her former life, and the necessity of her giving it up; but she spoke to her of God's holiness and hatred of sin, trying to teach her that every one was a sinner in His sight, and to lead her to that Saviour who had died for sinners. She knew that if the Holy Spirit blessed these instructions to the poor gipsy, and enabled her to feel that she herself was a sinner, and to believe in the Saviour as her Saviour, with a living faith, that faith would make her desirous in all things to do His will, and carefully avoid the sins she had formerly committed. Sometimes she entertained strong hopes that these instructions were taking effect, and it was therefore a great disappointment to them all when she went away, for it was no sense of duty that took her from them, but only her disinclination to a settled life. One good thing was, that she left her baby to Mrs Herbert's charge, and asked her to teach it to love God. But still Mrs Herbert feared that though her mind was informed, and she saw the value of religion, yet her heart was not at all changed.

Alice felt particularly disappointed. It was the first time she had ever thought of being of use to any one by her prayers, and she told her aunt she felt as if she *never could* have any heart to pray for any one again.

"I feel very sorry for you, dear Alice; I know how hard it is to bear a disappointment like this; but, my little girl, we must not give up in despair. We must all pray for her now more than ever, for she needs it more."

"But then, aunt, it seems of no use now, when she has no kind Mrs Herbert to teach her."

"Take care, my dear little girl," said her aunt, very gravely, but very kindly; "are you not putting Mrs Herbert in the place of God? The words of the wisest and best of men will fall on the ear without any effect, and make no impression on the heart, if God does not bless them; while God by His Holy Spirit can call back a little word to this woman's mind, to which, perhaps, at the time, she paid no attention—can call it back with such force as to strike conviction at once to her heart and bring her to Christ. No, no, Alice; we must not despair. Christ has bid us pray, and we must go on doing it, even though years pass by in which we see no fruit."

Soon after the departure of the gipsy, Mr Percy came to pay them a visit. He was much pleased with the improvement he saw in his children. Alice had altogether lost the look of languor and ill-health she had when she came to Karnford, and she appeared much more cheerful and active. The languor had

partly proceeded from delicacy and ill-health, but it was much increased by her extreme indolence and want of energy. Against these she had struggled very hard, following her uncle's advice not to wait for great occasions on which to make great efforts, but to make an effort in everything she did, to quicken her movements, —to force herself, for example, to run up-stairs when she went to fetch anything, instead of creeping up like an old woman, as she used to do. Her health was much better too. The free air and exercise had done a great deal for her, and though still not so strong as her cousins, she was quite like a different creature. Mr Percy could not help seeing that Douglas also was much improved. His great love for him had not blinded him to the fact that he certainly was conceited, and too impatient of contradiction, and he was much pleased to find him more modest and humble, more aware of his faults, and anxious to correct them.

There was indeed a great change in Douglas; he no longer thought that he, a young and inexperienced boy, was as able to decide aright on any point as his father or uncle; he even acknowledged that in many things his cousins knew more than he did, and he had learned to give up his opinion to theirs, and to seek instruction from them. Mr Percy *was so much* pleased with the improvement he saw,

both in the health and character of his children, that he very willingly agreed to Mr and Mrs Graham's wish of keeping them at any rate till winter.

Our wild young friend Harry, too, had made great improvement in this time, and had convinced his father that he might now take back those terrible words, "Harry is not worthy to be trusted." I do not mean that he had quite overcome his idleness and carelessness, but he had at least learned to be more careful, both in making and in keeping promises.

Harry's sprained arm continued long very weak, and indeed it was not till towards the end of August that he quite recovered the use of it. They then began to think of their house-building scheme. Mr Graham had often taken the boys to a plantation where they were cutting down trees, to show them how they must proceed, so as to avoid all risk of injuring themselves or each other, and the face of the quarry had been carefully inspected and found free from danger; so they proposed, one day about this time, to Mr and Mrs Graham, that the next Saturday should be devoted to the commencement of this great undertaking. Mr Graham advised them to wait for Allen's birth-day, which was the Wednesday following, and they might work there all day, as they would have a whole holiday.

"But we might work that day too, uncle," said Douglas.

Mr Graham hesitated. "Papa has a very particular and a very pleasant reason for asking you to wait," said Mrs Graham, smiling.

"Oh, we will wait if you wish it, papa," said several of the children, "but what do you mean by a pleasant reason, mamma?"

"I cannot answer that question, I have let out too much of papa's secret already," she replied, laughing; "and I shall run away, lest I should be tempted to say more."

This little mystery was cleared up on the Tuesday before Allen's birth-day. When they were at luncheon, one of the servants came in and told Mr Graham that the box had come from M——.

"Very well, John." Then looking at the children, "The secret at last, Allen," he said.

"O papa, are you going to tell us now what your pleasant reason is?" they all cried.

"Oh, I think you had better wait till to-morrow, till Allen's birth-day."

"I know you are not in earnest, papa," said Harry, "although you look so grave. You are going to tell us."

Mr Graham smiled, and told them that when their *uncle Percy* had been at Karnford, he and Mr Gra-

ham had passed the children's territory in their walk one day; and that when he had heard of their plan of building a house there, he had said, he should like very much to contribute to their pleasure, by furnishing them with a complete set of the tools they would require, so that they need not have the trouble of taking those they had in their workshop up the hill every time they wished to work at their house. He had asked Mr Graham to order an axe, saw, and hammer for each of the three elder boys; a good store of chisels, nails, screw-drivers, &c., some rope, a large wheelbarrow, and two strong baskets.

"Not forgetting," added Mrs Graham, laughing, "some cooking utensils, in case you might like to cook your dinner there some day."

"O mamma, may we do that—may we spend the whole day there to-morrow?"

"Please, mamma, say yes," said several of them. "Oh, it would be so delightful to go there early, and work all day like regular work-people—to go at six in the morning."

Mrs Graham said her only difficulty was, that she thought they would do too much.

"But," said Mr Graham, "we will make Allen the superintendent, and he must regulate all their working hours. I think we may allow them, do not you?"

Mrs Graham's assent was scarcely heard for the vehement thanks and exclamations of delight; but Mr Graham ordered silence, that he might tell them a rule he wished to make, namely, that if there was any quarrelling, they were to be excluded from their territory for such a time as he should think fit.

"Oh," they all said, "they were not afraid of quarrelling—they never quarrelled."

"Not often," Mr Graham said; "but still he would advise them to take care, for he knew how often quarrels arise in undertakings of this kind,—each one is so apt to think his own plan, of which he has thought, and found out all the advantages, better than any other which is new to him, and the advantages of which he has not considered. So he would advise them to take care, and to keep a good watch over themselves."

"I wish you and mamma would go with us, papa," said Allen.

"I should like it very much, Allen; but we are going to spend the day with Miss Buchanan. We shall take Gracie with us, and allow Lewis to go with you, under the charge of Alice and Eleanor."

When they began to settle what they should do the next day, Mr Graham said he would strongly advise them to begin with building a tool-house. Among the *other useful* things uncle Percy had ordered, there was

a strong lock and hinges for a door, and it would be much more convenient for them to have a safe place there to leave their tools locked up in, than to bring them down every day when they were done working. He was going to give them a cart to-morrow to take up their things, but could not promise them one every day they wished it.

The boys were very unwilling to give up the plan of beginning the house next day. They thought it would not be nearly so amusing to build a common shed, as to begin their fine house with two rooms, windows, &c. But when uncle Percy's box was opened, and they saw the numerous articles his kindness had provided for them, they acknowledged at once that it would be impossible for them to carry them up and down the hill every day.

Mr Graham was up the next morning and went part of the way with them; it was such a fine fresh cool morning, he appeared almost to regret that he could not go all the way, but he had some letters to write, and was obliged to leave them. He told Eleanor that mamma had put up a basket of grapes to refresh them in the middle of their hard labours, and that she had gone down the night before to put them in the cart herself.

"How kind mamma and papa are to take so much

interest in our plays," said Marion, as they stood watching Mr Graham going down the hill. "Papa speaks as if he were quite as much interested as we are."

"Papa says," replied Harry, "that he thinks this play may be a very good thing for us all."

"I am sure it is a very happy thing," said Douglas; "but I do not quite see how it is to do us any good."

"Papa says," replied Harry, "that one thing in which he thinks it will be of use to us, will be in teaching us to bear with one another, and yield to one another in all our little plans."

"Papa said, too," continued Marion, "that it will be a great trial of our patience and sense, the making our shed to-day. If we are in too great a hurry to get it done that we may begin to our house, we will find the evil of it afterwards; and mamma said it might be very useful for us to learn, even in our play, to do everything in the best way."

"Allen," said Eleanor, laughing, "you will need to be very prudent and sensible to-day; you see how much is expected from us, and all the responsibility of our behaviour rests on you, as you have been made our head."

"Oh, but that is only about the length of time we *are to work*, so as not to tire ourselves—we must

hold a council to decide upon the best plan of operations."

"Then we had better make some rules," said Douglas, "lest we begin to dispute and quarrel. We will make you chairman of the committee, Allen; and after you have given your opinion, we will all follow in regular order, the ladies first, of course," making a bow of mock respect to the girls.

They all laughed heartily at Douglas's committee, and Eleanor said they would call it "The House Committee." When they came to the spot, they found a good store of strong planks and split fir branches, which Mr Graham had caused the wright to prepare for them. Allen then described to the others the plan he had formed for building the shed. The first thing to be done was to cut down two or three of the young trees, then to saw them into proper lengths for the upright posts; these were to be pointed at one end, and driven into the ground, and then split branches nailed from one to the other for the walls.

"But," said Douglas, "these branches will not fit into one another; so that, however close we put them, there will be still holes that will let the rain in."

Harry said they would stop up the holes with clay and moss; "But oh, Allen, we should have asked papa for straw to thatch our roof with."

"So we should," said Allen, "but I think we can manage by nailing strong planks *across* first, then the split branches *along* from side to side, filling up the holes with clay as in the walls."

"And we must have some sort of floor to keep our tools from the damp ground," said Eleanor.

This proved rather a difficult question. Allen said they might have made their floor of clay, but then it would be so long before it dried. Here Georgie made a suggestion that was much approved of. He said there was a great deal of sand and small gravel beside the burn, and he thought if they spread it upon the clay and trod it in with their feet, it would make a very good floor.

"Capital, Georgie," said Eleanor; "you, Marion, and I will carry the gravel, and Lewis and Alice will tread it in."

It was also arranged that the three boys should each cut down a tree, make it into posts, and drive them into the ground; and then Allen, who was the cleverest carpenter, should make the door, while Harry and Douglas were finishing the walls.

Just as they were beginning their work, M'Pherson came up to see them. They all clustered round him, and told him their plans, which he very much approved *of; only, he* said, he thought Alice and Lewis might

go on for a little while by themselves, and leave Eleanor, Marion, and Georgie to dig the holes for the posts to go in. "You must put them far in, Master Allen, for they will not be so firm that way as if you drove them in."

"Could we not drive them in?" asked Allen.

No, M'Pherson was sure they could not; and besides, they would have to make their house very low, if they were to be so far above the posts as to be able to drive them in. He began all the holes for the girls, as it was rather hard work; and, before leaving them, he gave them one piece of advice, which was, that they should agree to stop at certain hours for a certain time. "If you do not, you will go on working till you are quite tired, and then you will get disheartened, and disinclined to begin again."

They agreed to the prudence of this, and asked him to advise them when to stop, and for how long.

He looked at his watch. "You may stop for an hour for breakfast at eight o'clock. Then work till twelve; take some luncheon, and rest for half an hour; then again rest at three for an hour; and at five, I think, you will have finished your work altogether."

Allen hung up his watch where he could see it, and said he would make a ringing sound on the saw when it was time to stop. They were all so busy and so

much interested in their occupations, that they could hardly believe it was eight o'clock when they heard the first summons, and it was with some unwillingness that they obeyed it. Breakfast was, however, very merry, and they began again at nine o'clock.

All the posts were cut, though not pointed, and the girls and Georgie had dug the holes, and were ready to help Lewis and Alice in their floor-making. When the boys had pointed their posts, they each required an attendant to hold them up, while they threw in the earth and trod it firmly down. This did not occupy long, and it was yet early when Allen was ready to begin the door, and Douglas and Harry the walls. Alice and Lewis were now employed in holding one end of the planks firm, while Douglas and Harry were nailing the other. Allen made his door by laying some planks close together, and nailing others across them. This was easily enough done; the difficulty was in putting on the lock and hinges, so as to fit into the door-way. He had nearly finished putting on the lock when he found it was twelve, and very reluctantly he made his signal. All the children remonstrated. Harry and Douglas had nearly finished the walls, and another coating of sand would make the floor complete. Allen was too much interested in his own work not to agree *to their* wishes; but they soon found the wisdom of

M'Pherson's advice. They were all getting very tired; the boys knocked their own fingers instead of the nails, and then blamed Alice and Lewis for not holding the planks straight. In short, when, about a quarter from one, they were obliged to stop, they all looked weary and discontented, and very different from what they had been at breakfast time.

"I am very tired," said Harry, throwing himself on the grass; "I wish, Allen, you had not gone on working."

"I 'm sure," said Allen, angrily, "it was your own fault; you asked me to go on, and that is all the thanks you give me for giving way to you."

Harry was going to answer in the same tone, when Douglas put his hand on his mouth, saying, "We were very foolish not to follow M'Pherson's advice, but we shall be still more foolish if we quarrel about it now. I daresay that was one of the things," he continued, "in which uncle thought this might be useful to us, teaching us to keep our resolutions, even though only made in play."

Allen and Harry had some difficulty in restraining their tempers, for when people are very tired, they are often cross; but they did succeed, and when Eleanor proposed, as a sort of punishment for their folly, that they should rest till two, and then again at three, they

agreed, and sat chatting till two, their good-humour and cheerfulness returning as they got less tired. The girls now made a fire, and boiled some potatoes for dinner; and exactly at three the boys came, and they all sat down in good-humour. They were getting on well with the roof; and when, after the girls had washed the dishes and put them away, they went to see the shed, they found it was almost finished, just some of the holes in the roof to fill up; and they all busied themselves with that, so that long before five it was quite complete, and their tools neatly deposited in their new habitation. When they had admired their work sufficiently they sat down on the grass, in front of where they intended their house to be, and where they had a very fine view. Eleanor then remembered the grapes, which they had quite forgotten until now; mamma had put them in such a snug corner that they had not seen them. They put aside one of the finest bunches for M'Pherson, whose visit was impatiently expected.

"What shall we call our house?" asked Douglas; "I think it should be Harry Hall."

They all laughed at the absurd sound Harry Hall, and Harry said they should call it Sunset Cottage, they would have such a fine view of the sunset from *the* windows.

"There is M'Pherson," cried Marion and Georgie at the same time, and they ran down to meet him. He admired their house quite as much as they expected, only he thought it would have been better to have thatched the roof.

Harry said they had forgotten to ask papa for straw.

"But when you remembered, one of you might have gone down again, and your papa would have given it to you."

"No," Allen said, "papa wanted to teach them forethought, and so he had said they must ask for all they required at once, and if they forgot anything, the inconvenience of being obliged to do without it might teach them to remember better another time."

M'Pherson said, "That was a very good lesson."

"That is what mamma says I require to learn," said Marion, laughing. "When I am sewing out of doors beside her, I spend half my time running into the house to get things I have forgotten."

"We have learned another thing," said Harry; and he told M'Pherson the story about their not stopping soon enough in their work.

M'Pherson said, "That too was a very useful lesson, and one very difficult to learn. When I was a boy," he said, "when I was busy at play, I used to forget things that I ought to do, and always when my

father spoke to me about it, I used to be so sorry, and resolve that I would do all that I had to do before I began to play at all; and so, for some days I would do quite right; but then, one day, perhaps, when I was going to feed our pig, or something of that kind, some of my companions would come and try to persuade me to go out with them. I would reason thus, 'If I feed the pig when I come in, it will do as well, and if I go and feed it just now, I shall lose my walk altogether,' and so my father would come home, and find the poor pig without any food. One day he said to me, 'I'll tell you where your fault lies, James; you make very wise rules when anything happens to make you see very clearly the reason of the thing; but whenever your wishes begin to blind you, you begin to reason about it again, and it is no wonder that you decide wrong then. Take my advice; having been wise enough to make a good rule, be wise enough to keep it, even though your wishes should lead you to believe it too strict. It will be quite time enough to argue about that, when the temptation has passed away, and you are able to argue coolly.'"

The children's feelings of weariedness and fatigue vanished when they got home, and found their papa and mamma waiting for them for tea, and quite ready *and eager* to hear all their news.

"Papa," said Georgie, when the story had been told, "I did not quite understand what M'Pherson meant about making resolutions."

"I think you will understand it better if you think of your own case. When M'Pherson advised you to make your resolution, he gave you such an excellent reason that you consented and made the rule. But when the time came for you to keep it, this good reason had faded a little from your mind, whilst your strong wish to continue working misled you, by filling your mind with ideas of the pleasure of going on, so that you had no time to think of the reasons for stopping to rest. Now, as you were in this way unable to reason coolly and fairly, your wishes being such a strong advocate on the wrong side, as M'Pherson said, your true wisdom would have been to have kept your rule, because you had made it at a time when you were better able to decide aright. Do you understand that now?"

Georgie said he did; and looking smilingly at his mamma, he continued, "I wish very much to sit up a little longer to-night; but the other night, when mamma convinced me that I am apt to get cross when I sit up too long, I made a rule that I would never ask to sit up longer than usual; so I will keep

it now without waiting to reason about it. That is what you mean, papa?"

"Exactly, my little man," said his papa, kissing him. "Good night, and pleasant dreams to you of finding out the good of thus manfully setting yourself at once to practise a wise saying."



CHAPTER XI.

SUNSET COTTAGE.

AS the Thursday was a very rainy day, on Friday the children found a good deal to do in the garden, so that they did not go up the hill again until Saturday, and on that day Mr and Mrs Graham accompanied them to see the house. The outside having been duly admired, Allen, with an air of much importance, drew the key from his pocket, and unlocked the door. The interior looked very tidy; the clay floor was smooth and even,—the barrow had been wheeled into the middle, with the baskets, ropes, nails, and smaller tools arranged in it, while the larger ones were neatly piled beside it on the floor.

"O Allen," exclaimed Mr Graham, "you ought not to have laid your tools on the ground. I fear that, in spite of all the trouble you have bestowed upon your floor, it must be much too damp to admit of that."

"It is quite dry, papa," replied Allen; at the same time he lifted up one of the saws, which were lying one above the other near the door. The uppermost one had a few spots of rust, the next one a good many more, but the lowest was in a very bad condition. The boys looked at one another in dismay.

"I am very sorry that I did not remember to warn you of this," said Mr Graham; "but all we can now do is to set about cleaning them. You have oil, have you not? Uncle Percy ordered a stone bottle for the oil, as being less liable than a common one to be broken in your journeys up and down."

"We forgot to bring it up," said Harry; "but I will run down to the house for it directly. Only, papa, tell us first where we can keep our tools until the floor dries."

"We will drive in some strong nails to hang the saws on, and we must make shelves for the others," replied Mr Graham.

"How tiresome! how very provoking!" exclaimed Douglas. "I suppose we shall not be able to begin Sunset Cottage to-day. M'Pherson was very stupid not to tell us that we ought not to lay our tools upon the floor."

"I dare say," replied Allen, laughing, "M'Pherson *did not* imagine that we could be so foolish as to pro-

pose laying them on the floor. It is not fair to lay the blame of our own mistakes upon him; particularly as he did not see the inside of the house after it was finished. We were so busy discussing our plans for the cottage that we forgot to show it to him."

"Well, I can only say," replied Douglas, discontentedly, "that it is very provoking to be so often prevented from beginning the house. I do not care about it at all now; we have had so many disappointments that I am quite disgusted with the whole concern. First an entire day was wasted in building this tiresome house, and now another is to be spent in making stupid shelves."

"Oh, but we were very happy while we were building this house," said Harry, cheerfully; "and I am sure we shall be very happy to-day too, for papa is going to stay to help us. I will run down now to fetch the oil while you settle where the shelves are to be."

Allen tried hard to make Douglas take a share in the discussion, but he walked discontentedly away, saying, that he did not feel any interest in the house at all now; that for his part, he wished they would give it up,—it was only a waste of their play-hours to go on with it, for he was sure that they never could succeed. Mr Graham advised Allen to leave him

alone, and when Harry came back he sat down with them to clean their tools.

Mrs Graham proposed that she and the girls should make an excursion through the woods in search of brambles, and she invited Douglas to accompany them. He refused at first; said that it was too much trouble, but in a minute or two, he changed his mind, and went after them. He was not at all an agreeable companion; sauntering listlessly along beside them, finding fault with everything and everybody, and casting a gloom over the whole party. Alice soon looked as listless and unhappy as he did, and Marion's quick, hasty temper could not bear his perpetual contradictions. Eleanor alone continued to be good-humoured and cheerful, and seeing that Douglas and Marion were irritating each other, she proposed that they should separate—that she and Douglas should take one path, Alice and Marion another; and that mamma and Gracie should go on a little farther to a comfortable seat until the others joined them again.

Having got Douglas by himself, Eleanor resolved to use every effort to soothe him into good-humour, but she found it rather a hard task at first, he was in such a perverse mood, and so determined not to be *pleased.* They soon came to a little burn; Douglas

made no offer to assist Eleanor, but when he saw her begin to cross, he told her in a disagreeable, sneering tone, that she could never get across at that part. Eleanor thought that he was wrong, but she turned back at once, and asked him to show her another place. A little ashamed, Douglas did so. It was a much more difficult crossing than the one Eleanor had chosen, but she made no complaint; and when, in consequence of an unsteady stone, one of her feet slipped into the water, she only laughed merrily, and said that it would do her no harm.

She saw some very fine brambles on the other side of the paling, and proposed to climb over for them; but she gave up to his petted "Nonsense, you cannot get over here,"—and walked on quietly behind him, reflecting upon the pleasure it would give the others if she succeeded in restoring Douglas's good temper. She did not speak much to him, only now and then pointing out to him anything that amused her, and taking no notice of the surliness of his answers. By and by, Douglas finding that there were no brambles in the road he had chosen, began to find fault with her for having brought him that way. She did not remind him that she had wished to take another path, but asked him to try to find out some way of getting into a plantation before them, as she

knew that they generally found a great many there. Douglas made his way through a gap in the hedge.

"I am afraid I cannot get through, Douglas, without tearing my frock," said Eleanor.

"Nonsense, you can get through well enough if you choose to try; but you girls always make difficulties."

Eleanor made the attempt without answering; it was very trying to her temper, for Douglas did not help her; and her frock caught several times, but she always quietly and patiently disentangled it, and at length, with much difficulty, got through. As she had said—they found a great many fine brambles, and Douglas began to enter into the spirit of the business. Still he was very careless and provoking. Sometimes, when Eleanor asked him to pull down a branch that was too high for her to reach, he would make a careless spring up at it—catch it by the very bunch of fruit that Eleanor wished to procure, and crush them in his hand. And once, when she was standing on the edge of a ditch, busily gathering off a branch, the end of which Douglas was holding down, he allowed it to spring back to its place so suddenly, that it knocked her basket off her arm, and all its contents fell into the ditch. This accident, however, and Eleanor's good-humoured way of bearing it, had a *good effect* in opening his eyes to his own rudeness

and surliness. He took some trouble to get back the basket, and to clean it for her, although he had not yet recovered his good temper so far as to make an apology. It was now time to return to Mrs Graham, and they were obliged to do so with an empty basket. Eleanor, however, was consoled for this by the improvement in Douglas. He tried to find an easier way of getting out of the wood than the gap by which they had entered; and when they came again to the burn, he condescended to say—

"I think you had better try the other stones, Eleanor, they look more steady."

Eleanor exerted herself very much to complete the recovery of his good-humour. As he had returned only petted answers when she had tried before to interest him in the objects around them, she determined to find some new subject to talk about. Her own mind was full of Sunset Cottage, but she knew that would not be a good topic of conversation, as it had been in some degree the cause of his ill temper; so she began to tell him about a plan that had come into her head of a new door into their gardens, and she asked his advice upon the subject. She succeeded most admirably, and Mrs Graham was very glad to find, when they rejoined her, that Douglas was in a much better humour than when he left her.

Douglas was a great favourite with little Gracie, and the confidence with which (forgetting all his crossness) she ran to meet him, and to tell him of the adventures she had met with, completely restored him to good-humour, and he was as merry as usual when they went back to Mr Graham and the boys. Alice and Marion had been very successful in their search, and with what Mrs Graham and Gracie had gathered, their basket was quite full.

There was a long consultation about the house building before they returned home. Mr Graham recommended them strongly to give up the plan of having two rooms, as he was sure that they could not succeed in making a neat passage, and they had hinges for only one door. So they decided that they would have one room—the door in the middle, and a window on each side of it. But it required a great deal of calculation and measurement, to settle all the different points that had to be considered. There was the size of the house—the distance between the windows—the breadth of the door, and many other things, to be fixed upon; and then the number and height of the upright posts had to be calculated, and how far they ought to be apart. Douglas's interest in the house was quite renewed during these discussions, and *as they* turned to go home, he gave his opinion upon

a disputed point, in his usual somewhat dictatorial tone.

"O Douglas," observed Mr Graham, smiling, "I thought you had lost all interest in the cottage."

Douglas coloured. "I was in the pet, uncle, when I said that, but I have got the better of it."

"So I see, Douglas, or I should not have said anything; it is always a bad plan to laugh at people when they are cross."

"I think that you were all very kind not to laugh at me to-day," replied Douglas, "when I was so unjust and unreasonable; but Eleanor was the best of all. I really do not think anything can put her out of temper."

"I must do Eleanor the justice to say," replied Mr Graham, "that she has taken great pains to subdue her natural quickness of temper, and she has succeeded very well."

"Yes," said Mrs Graham, very kindly; "Eleanor set about it in the right way,—by asking God's help —by keeping a strict watch over herself, often examining herself and looking back upon the instances in which she had failed, in order to find out the causes of failure, and to watch more earnestly against them another time."

All the young ones looked very much pleased to

hear this praise of Eleanor; for her good-humour, cheerfulness, and unselfishness, made her a universal favourite.

She blushed deeply as she answered, "Mamma, I think that it is not very difficult for me to keep my temper. In general everything looks so happy and bright to me, that little trials of temper seem nothing at all."

"Certainly, my dear," replied Mrs Graham, "a person with a cheerful disposition like yours, has less excuse for losing her temper, or being discontented about trifles, than one who is naturally dull and peevish. And as your cheerfulness is a very precious gift from your heavenly Father, so you ought to be deeply impressed with the responsibility it lays upon you, and to be very anxious to improve it to His glory. Women, Eleanor," she continued, smiling, "have not so many opportunities of being of use as men have; but the duty that belongs peculiarly to us is, by gentleness, kindness, and patience, to cheer and soothe our fathers, brothers, or husbands, when they are harassed and annoyed by cares and troubles in which we cannot participate."

"O aunt, your description of what women may do, reminds me of what the gipsy said one day!" exclaimed Alice. "She said that our kindness to her

and her baby was like the cool refreshing dew to the thirsty flower."

"Very well, Alice," said her uncle, laughing, "and I suppose you will compare gentlemen to the violent thunder-shower, often doing as much harm as good, crushing to the earth the plants that the dew would have fed."

"Oh no, uncle," said Alice, "I am sure I never could call you a furious thunder-shower."

"I know, though," said Douglas, "who might very well be called a thunder-shower, and a very violent one, too, Mr——."

"And what do you call boys who lose their temper and find fault with every one around them, because they themselves have done a stupid thing?" asked Mr Graham, interrupting him. "Nay, do not look angry, Douglas; I shall not say anything more, but I think it will be quite time enough to find fault with other people for losing their temper when you have conquered your own."

"But, uncle," said Douglas, in a half-dissatisfied tone, "I think you will stop conversation altogether if you never allow us to speak of other people's faults."

"Better stop conversation altogether then, than do what is wrong," replied Mr Graham. "But I think,

Douglas, it is not a very flattering account of our conversational powers to say, that unless we talk about the faults of others we must hold our tongues."

"But, papa," said Harry, "is it not sometimes right and useful to speak about the faults of others, for the sake of avoiding them?"

"Oh! if Douglas meant to say Mr So-and-so has a very bad temper, but if I do not take care of mine, it will most likely be as bad as his by the time I am as old; in that case I beg his pardon for interrupting him, and will be very glad to hear it now."

"You know, uncle, that I did not mean to say that," replied Douglas, as he turned half-smiling away from his uncle's arch look. "But there is one question I want to ask you, and it is about my own fault. You know that in some ways Harry and I are a good deal alike; we are neither of us very patient, and both rather fond of our own way. Now I want to know what made Harry so much better tempered than I was to-day."

"That question touches upon one feature in your dispositions, in which I think Harry has an advantage over you. When you are disappointed in a case where you can do nothing to help yourselves but must just submit, I think you bear the disappointment *equally* ill. But in a case like to-day's, where some-

thing can be done, Harry often sets to work cheerily and good-humouredly, while you give up in despair, and get petted and cross. Seriously speaking, my dear Douglas, you should think of this fault, and strive against it. It is one that may greatly affect both your happiness and your usefulness in after-life. Do you remember telling me the other day that you should like so much to be a great man? You can never be that unless you learn not to give up your plans whenever a difficulty occurs.

"You remind me," said Mrs Graham, "of what I heard one boy say to another the other day. I was returning from the manse, and two boys overtook me at the stile leading from the meadows into the high road. They were walking very fast, and when they came up to me they asked me, 'how far they were from M——,' and 'what o'clock it was?' When I answered them, one of them sitting down upon the stile, began to cry, saying that they could never be in time. 'Come on, man!' cried the other; 'let us go as far as we can; you can sit down at the end and cry as well as here.'"

The children laughed, while Mr Graham said, "that he was a sensible boy, and had no doubt learned that crying never helped any one yet. But," he continued, "I am not sure, mamma, that your story quite illus-

trates the weak point in Douglas's character. I do not think he would give up a plan as long as he had the least chance of success, only when one plan fails he wants courage to try another."

"I am quite sorry that we are at home," cried Allen, "for I like this kind of talk very much."

"Take care that you are not satisfied with liking to talk about these things, Allen," said Mr Graham. "It is very amusing to hear faults pointed out, but it is not always so amusing to try and conquer them."

On Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, all the play hours were devoted to the building of Sunset Cottage. It occupied them longer than their shed had done, because by Mr Graham's advice they built it in a much more substantial way. They squared off the rough edges of the planks which prevented them from fitting in to one another, and they made each plank slope out a little downwards, so that it overlapped the one below it. Although this deprived the girls, Georgie, and Lewis, of one of their occupations, that of filling up the crevices with moss and clay, they yet found plenty to do. Two of them were constantly employed as servants to the older boys, holding their planks steady, handing them nails, and such services; while the others busied themselves in *levelling* the floor, and carrying clay and sand for it.

When they were tired of such hard work, they swept away the litter that the boys had made, and piled the shavings, little bits of wood, and branches of trees, into separate store heaps, to serve as fuel when they required a fire.

Very busy, and very happy they were; so busy and happy indeed that there would have been a great danger of their forgetting to go home in time for dinner, if the butler had not very kindly offered to ring the bell outside the house, every day at five minutes before four. This summons was not always very welcome, but it had always been complied with, though sometimes a little grumblingly, until the Friday, when it was heard after they had been busy for only about an hour.

"John must have made a mistake," cried Harry.

"I do not think that it can be a mistake," said Allen, "it is so much too soon. I am afraid that papa or mamma must wish to speak to us."

"I will run down and see," said Georgie, always ready to oblige the others; "perhaps they may only require one of us, and I may be enough."

Allen did not think that that would do, because perhaps they might be required in a hurry; and he said, "he was almost sure that if only one had been wished for, his mamma would have sent a messenger and not have disturbed them all."

"It is very provoking!" exclaimed Harry, throwing his hatchet impatiently on the ground.

"It will be *very* provoking to-morrow," said Allen, laughing, "when you find that you have spoiled your hatchet in your anger. *It* did not ring the bell, Harry; it is unfair to punish it."

"I have not spoiled it," replied Harry, a good deal irritated by Allen's mocking manner.

"Indeed," said Allen in the same provoking tone; "it must be a very extraordinary axe not to be spoiled by such treatment. Made of some peculiar kind of iron, I suppose; pray, Harry, tell me the name of that kind of iron. I should like a hatchet made of it," he continued, laying his hand on Harry's shoulder when he did not answer.

"I really wish you would be quiet, Allen," said Harry, very angrily, throwing off Allen's hand.

"Poor child! its temper seems rather bad to-day," pursued Allen, pretending to pat him on the back.

Harry turned furiously round upon Allen, and would have struck him if Marion and Eleanor had not caught his arm, and drawn him away with them.

"You are a most provoking creature, Allen," said Douglas. "What is the use of teasing Harry?"

"It was not I who put Harry into a bad humour," replied Allen, laughing; "it was the bell, and it has

made you a little cross too, Douglas. I daresay we shall find a good many notches in your hatchet to-morrow, as well as in Harry's, from the violent way in which you threw it down."

"I have no patience with you, Allen," said Douglas, "when you get into that teasing mood."

"You had better try to get some, then," said Allen, still more provokingly. "Patience is a good commodity at all times, though your store is never very large."

A very angry reply was on Douglas's lips, when the dispute was stopped by their meeting Mr and Mrs Graham with a party of strangers. The children were introduced to the strangers; they were Mrs Wilson, her son, and two daughters. Mrs Wilson looked very gentle and pleasant; she spoke kindly to the young Grahams; hoped that they and her young people would be good friends; and told them that she had come to spend a few weeks in the Lindseys' house, as they were still unable to return home. The young Wilsons were very uninteresting-looking children. Maria and Eliza were finely dressed, stiff and formal, while James was rude and awkward. Our young friends, not being in a very good-humour at any rate, disliked them even more than they might have done at another time. As they knew, however, that Mr and Mrs Graham ex-

pected them to be kind and polite to their guests, they did their best to entertain them. It was very hard work. Little could be got from James but "yes" or "no," accompanied by a rude stare, while Maria and Eliza seemed to be quite shocked at the idea of building houses, working in gardens, or riding in carts. The Karnford party were much relieved when Mrs Wilson took her departure, though that pleasure was somewhat marred by their hearing Mrs Graham accept an invitation for the six older children to spend the Saturday of the ensuing week at Benholme.

"O mamma, I wish that you had refused that invitation," exclaimed Eleanor, as soon as the carriage drove off; "they are so tiresome. I am sure none of us can like to go."

"My little daughter," said Mrs Graham, smiling; "we must sometimes do what we do not like. I do not think they seem to be very pleasant children, but, perhaps, you will find them better than you expect. At any rate, I could not refuse without being rude."

"Now, young people," said Mr Graham; "I advise you to hasten back to the house. You will scarcely have time to put away your tools before dinner."

The children looked at one another, and, after a moment's hesitation, Allen came forward. "Papa," he said, colouring very much; "you told us that if

we ever quarrelled about our house, you would punish us by forbidding us to go there for a certain time."

He stopped, and Mr Graham said gravely, "I hope, Allen, that you have not done anything to make it necessary for me to punish you in this way?"

"Yes, papa," replied Allen, in a low tone; "we older boys have been quarrelling; but it was all my fault, I teased and provoked both Harry and Douglas. I am very sorry," he continued, his voice faltering a little; "but I wish that you would punish me alone, and allow the rest to go up to the house as usual, for it was entirely my fault."

"No, no, Allen," cried Douglas, eagerly, coming forward, "we were wrong too; and, even if we had not been so, I am sure that if uncle forbids you to go to Sunset Cottage, we will not go without you, and leave you alone."

"No, indeed, we will not," cried the other children.

Mr Graham inquired what they had quarrelled about. Allen gave him a very candid statement of the whole.

Mr Graham looked grave. "You have done wrong, Allen, very wrong," he said; "but as you must lose no time in going up the hill to put away your tools, I will only say just now, that I think I shall leave it to yourselves to decide, whether you have incurred the

penalty or not. When I made the rule, I intended it to refer to quarrels that might arise about the different plans of proceeding in building the house. I made it because I thought that such disputes would be more likely to arise in this play than in others, and I wished my threat to act as a sort of extra defence against an extra temptation. Strictly speaking, your quarrel of to-day was not one of the kind I intended my rule to refer to, and you may decide for yourselves whether I ought to punish you or not."

Silently and sadly they went up the hill and put away the tools. As they turned to go home Douglas said with a deep sigh, "I think that we ought to punish ourselves, for, although we did not quarrel about the house, yet it was our being so much interested in the work that made us cross and petted when we were forced to leave it."

"Yes," said Harry, "and I know that things of this kind are more apt to make me cross than even the cases papa mentioned; and, as papa says, he made the rule to serve as an extra defence against an extra temptation, I am sure that we ought to regard the quarrel of to-day as one of those against which he wished to guard us."

"I think so," replied Douglas; "it may not be *exactly* one of the cases uncle meant to punish in this

way, but if he had thought of the likelihood of its happening, he would have included it. And, besides, he is so very anxious that you and I, Harry, should overcome our impatience and fretfulness, that I am sure he will be glad if we punish ourselves for it. What do you think, Allen?"

"I have thought, ever since papa spoke, that we ought to decide upon staying away from the house," replied Allen, in a sorrowful tone; "but I did not like to say so, because it seems so hard to punish you for my fault, and the girls and Georgie too, who took no part in the quarrel."

"Oh, never mind us," said Eleanor; "I am quite glad that you have decided upon this, because I am sure papa and mamma will be pleased. But you must not look so sad, Allen, we can be quite happy without this play for some time."

"Oh yes," said Harry; "we will find plenty of work and amusement in the gardens, and other things. And you must not say that it was all your fault, Allen, for if we had not been cross at any rate we would not have minded your teasing us."

"Besides, Allen," said Douglas, "I am sure that it is very seldom that you make us quarrel; you are far oftener a peace-maker."

Allen felt their kindness very much, but in spite

of all they said, he could not but feel that he had been most to blame, and he was the more sorry for it when he saw how anxious they all were to cheer him. He was very silent and sad during dinner. Harry and Douglas chatted almost as merrily as usual, for the consciousness of having done right in deciding to punish themselves counterbalanced the pain that the remembrance of their fault caused them. It was so late before they reached home that they had not an opportunity, before dinner, of telling Mr Graham what their decision was, but as soon as the servants left the room Douglas told him.

"I am particularly glad to hear this, Douglas," said Mr Graham. "I could not have blamed you if you had decided otherwise; both because your dispute to-day hardly merited the name of a quarrel; and because it really was not one of the cases that the rule originally referred to. But your resolution assures me that you are anxious to improve yourselves, and it also gives me great confidence in your candour and honesty. Your conduct in this respect gives me more pleasure than your quarrel gave me pain, as far as Douglas and Harry are concerned, but you, Allen, have grieved me much to-day. I see that you are sorry for it, and I forgive you as freely as Douglas and Harry *have done*, but I should be sorry if I thought that

our willingness to forgive you could make you think lightly of your fault."

"O papa, I am very sorry, I know that I was wrong; I felt it even at the time, and I saw that I was making Harry angry, and still I went on."

"Yes, Allen," said Mr Graham, very gravely; "you committed a great fault. You did not consider what you were doing, but you were in reality using your utmost endeavours to make your brother sin. You remember what Paul says, 'If meat make my brother to offend I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.' Compare this resolution with your conduct to-day; consider how hateful sin is in God's sight, and yet you, out of mere wantonness, tempted your brother to sin. O Allen, consider, that in doing this you are working *for* Satan and *against* God, against the precious Saviour who died for our sins."

Allen could not speak; he laid his head on the table to hide his tears.

"I am giving you great pain, Allen," continued Mr Graham, after a few minutes' silence; "but, my dear boy, I speak thus solemnly to you because I think you do not consider seriously enough what you are doing, when you provoke and tease your brothers and sisters as you often do; and I think if I could once

convince you of the great evil of this seemingly trifling fault, you would guard against it more carefully for the future. It is not an uncommon fault among children, among even kind-hearted and affectionate children, but it always grieves me much to see it, because I look upon it in this light as a serious offence; and where a child is kind-hearted, I think that it is only necessary to show him the real tendency of what he is doing to make him strive against it. I have said enough upon the subject, and I trust that you will not forget it too soon. But if I find that my warning has not the effect of preventing a repetition of this fault, I must use harsher measures the next time, for I cannot suffer you to injure the temper of any of your brothers and sisters by useless provocation and teasing. I shall dismiss the matter now, however; Gracie thinks that we have been talking too long about things she does not understand. Do you not, Gracie?"

"I do not like you to make Allen cry, papa," said little Gracie; "but I understand a little of what you have been saying, and I think that I ought not to refuse to be Lewis's horse as I did this morning, because that makes him angry, and that is very wrong, you know."

"Quite right, Gracie," said Mr Graham, kissing her;

"and I think you may all practise this principle of being careful not to give others occasion to sin. The opportunity of putting it in practice that most frequently occurs is in your arguments with one another. Remember never to press the argument when you see that your opponent is getting angry. And now I think we may have a walk this fine evening if you youngsters feel inclined to postpone the learning of your lessons till after tea."

Douglas reminded his uncle that he had forgotten to name the period of their banishment from Sunset Cottage.

"I think I shall say till this day week," said Mr Graham. "Do you think that too long?"

They said that it was not too long,—that a week would soon pass away; and they then all left the dining-room to prepare for their walk.

CHAPTER XII.

ABOUT DOGS.

THERE were several dogs about Karnford. First, there was an old nondescript called Cæsar, very ugly and by no means very amiable, at least so said strangers, though the little Grahams defended him most strenuously,—they said he was so affectionate and so faithful. However, he certainly was rather cross, and most of their friends rejoiced at his taking a fancy for the stable-yard in his old age. There he lay all day long, basking in the sun, or coiled up in a warm corner in the straw, and there he was allowed to remain undisturbed. He still appeared glad to see the children, when they went to pay him a visit; but he was too lazy to go out with them, or if they did succeed in coaxing him to go a little way, he soon tired and returned home again. Poor Cæsar! his temper had not improved as he grew *older;* but he was not much tried, for he seldom saw

strangers in the quiet nook he had chosen; and the servants, respecting his infirmities, allowed him to sleep in peace. He had a companion in the stable-yard, older, and nearly as lazy as himself, but much more good-natured.

Oscar had been a remarkably handsome setter, and he was a general favourite. Old as he was, he still testified his attachment to the whole family by a very affectionate greeting every time he saw them, hobbling up to them, thrusting his head into their hands, and wagging his tail most energetically. He and Cæsar agreed better now than they had done in Cæsar's youth. Oscar was too good-natured to quarrel without provocation; and poor Cæsar had no teeth, having spoilt them all when he was young, with carrying stones for the amusement of himself and the young people.

Then Mr Graham had a dog that was his own peculiar property—a very noble, handsome, staghound. He was too well-bred to be cross to any one, but too reserved and dignified to be familiar with any but his master. He would have protected the children from danger, even at the risk of his own life, but he was too grave and stately to play with them. The children admired him for his beauty, sense, and fidelity, and they were very proud of him, but they were much

fonder of their own pet, playfellow, and laughing-stock, dear, funny, good-humoured Mussie.

Mustard, or Mussie, as he was always called, was a rough terrier of a pale brown colour. Learned dog-fanciers said that he was not a very handsome dog; but he was much admired by the ignorant. He was too tall, and his hair was too long; but then he had such an engaging face,—he had such large, expressive eyes, and fine white teeth, shining the more brilliantly from the contrast with his jet-black mouth and gums. The little Grahams said that Mussie was very proud of his teeth, he showed them off so much. He had a curious fashion, when anything pleased him, of grinning like a person laughing, and snacking his teeth together with a loud noise, and this the children called "Mussie's snack." But it was not for his beauty that everybody liked Mussie; it was for his engaging disposition—his affection, good-nature, trickiness, and his love of fun. He had never been taught any tricks, but he had many of his own invention. His mode of greeting any one when he first saw them in the morning was to run up to them, snacking his teeth all the way; then he would stand up on his hind-legs, and put his two fore-paws round their wrist, as if he wished to shake hands. The children used always to call *Mussie's* fore-paws his hands, because he made so

much use of them; and they used to declare that Mussie could be easily taught to walk on his hindlegs altogether. Once he was actually found in the garden reaching up with his fore-paws into an apple-tree, and getting down apples for himself. He stood on his hind-legs, patted one of the branches repeatedly with his fore-paw until he heard an apple fall; he then jumped down and sought for it, found it, and carried it off in triumph. He was very fond of apples, but he liked them more for the pleasure of playing with them than for eating them. Indeed, a love of play was one of his great peculiarities. He would catch up a straw, a twig of a tree, or a fir-cone, and run off, sure of being chased by one or other of his companions; and in the noisy games they had together, it would have been difficult to tell whether the dog or the children enjoyed themselves most. He was constantly with them; he slept in the boys' room, walked with them, played with them, lay in the study while they were at their lessons, with all the patience he could muster, and even accompanied them to their gardens, though there he was rather a troublesome companion.

He did not like gardening at all, and he used to try many expedients to divert them from it; sometimes carrying off their things, sometimes jumping up upon them *to beseech them* to come and play, and then

again lying down on the gravel, and pretending to sleep, while he kept his bright black eyes wide open and keenly fixed to watch the first indication of a move towards the woods. In all ways and at all times Mussie used to be their companion and play-fellow.

I say "used to be," for, alas! poor Mussie was lost. About a year before the time when my story begins, all the family had gone to Edinburgh for a few weeks. The dogs had been so accustomed to the country, that Mr Graham was sure they would both be very unhappy and very troublesome in Edinburgh, and they were all left behind. When the children came back to Karnford, there was no Mussie to greet them, and no one knew what had become of him. The groom had spent two whole days riding about the country in search of him, but could get no tidings of him anywhere. At first, the children flattered themselves he would come back; they said he was too sensible to lose himself; but after some weeks they were obliged to give up all hope, and to conclude that he had either been stolen or killed. They would not for some time accept of Mr Graham's offer to get them another dog; but shortly before Alice and Douglas came they had got a terrier, although they all declared they could never love any one after Mussie.

And Garry did not prove a very good substitute for

their sensible favourite. He was a funny-looking dog, very like a miniature fox,—a stupid, but a good-natured little creature. Harry said that he was a fool, and had no mind. He went out with them, and sometimes he played with them, but not very often, and they still spoke with great interest and affection of dear Mussie, although they had given up all hopes of ever seeing him again. In this, however, they were mistaken, as you will hear afterwards. In the meantime, we will return to our story.

On this same Friday evening, Mr Graham left the tea-table before the others, to see a woman, the wife of one of his cottagers, who wished to speak to him. He did not return to the drawing-room before the young people had left it to prepare their lessons; but when they came back before going to bed, they found him talking to Mrs Graham about this woman. She had come to tell Mr Graham that her son, a wild, headstrong lad, had taken offence at something his father had said to him the previous night, had left home and had never returned. They had at first hoped that he had only gone to the house of his married sister, but his mother had been there and found that she had seen nothing of him, so that they feared greatly he must have fulfilled a threat he had often made of running away to sea. There was a

large seaport town, A——, about twenty miles from Karnford, and as that was the place he would most probably go to, Mr Graham had offered to go there next day, to try to hear some tidings of him.

He said that as he proposed going in the dog-cart, the older boys might go with him if they liked. If they liked! What boy does not like an excursion of any kind, more particularly a long drive in a dog-cart through a new country, and to see new things? His offer was eagerly and thankfully accepted.

"Can you take Georgie too?" asked Mrs Graham; "poor little man! he is of an awkward age—too old for Gracie and Lewis, and scarcely old enough for the older boys' plans and diversions."

"Oh, we can easily take him," replied Mr Graham; "he can sit between two of the others. I am glad you thought of it. But now, young gentlemen, we shall start to-morrow morning exactly at six, so I would advise you to go to bed soon."

Eleanor and Marion were down-stairs next morning in time to see them set off. It was a beautiful September morning; the sun was just risen, the dew still heavy upon the grass and shrubs, and there was that kind of pale blue mist arising from the woods and distant ground, which gives such a peculiar beauty to *the* early morning in summer and autumn. The girls

could not think of returning to the house after watching the departure of the dog-cart; and, as their hoops hung most temptingly in the hall, they took them down, and had an excellent race round the sweep and down the long avenue. They were very well matched, for although Marion was the fastest runner, yet Eleanor was so much more dexterous in turning sharp corners, without letting down her hoop, that she kept up with her the whole way, and they reached the lodge breathless and tired at the same moment. They could not run any more; so they passed through a wicket beside the lodge, into a footpath which led them straight to the wood at the bottom of the hill. They crossed the Karn by some stepping-stones, and sauntered leisurely down its banks towards the house. It was a very pretty walk, sometimes upon the soft green grass, close to the water's edge, then leaving it for a little to go along the top of a steep bank or to wind through the wood.

The girls walked on slowly, chatting upon various subjects, and often stopping to admire the pretty spiders' webs covered with dew, or gather flowers for a bouquet for Alice. They first discussed all the particulars of their race; telling one another where they had nearly allowed their hoops to fall, and at what part they had expected to be first. Then a casual

remark from Eleanor that they had never remembered to bring Alice and Douglas to see this walk, led them to speak about their cousins, and warm were the praises bestowed upon both.

"I do like Alice very much," said Eleanor; "she is so gentle and kind, and always so much interested in all our little joys and troubles. She is very unselfish."

"Yes," replied Marion, "I like her very much too; but oh! Eleanor, I *do* wish that she were not so very slow about everything. She fidgets me so much sometimes; when we are working in our garden, or at the house, she takes so long to do everything. Sometimes when the boys are waiting for her to fetch nails or such things, I have to press my feet firmly on the ground to keep myself from running forward to snatch it out of her hand, or to give her a push to make her walk faster."

"And perhaps push her down," said Eleanor, laughing. "But she is much quicker now than she used to be, and she has been so long delicate and weak, that it is no wonder she has got into the habit of moving slowly."

"Oh yes," replied Marion; "she is better, but still she often tries my temper very much. At lessons, when anything is to be found out, or when papa is

explaining anything, she thinks so slowly, I feel myself biting my lips to keep in the impatient words, and my head shakes with eagerness to get her on. I will tell you, Eleanor, of what she reminds me. Of Miss Raymond in that long walk we took last summer, when she was so frightened at crossing the stepping-stones. Do you remember how long she paused before she would put her foot upon the first stone? And then, when she was safe upon it, she stood there so long before she could be persuaded to try the next. Oh, I see her now," she continued, laughing merrily; "hesitating, putting forward her foot, then drawing it back, and then forward again. I am sure I shall think of her whenever Alice takes one of her fits of slowness."

Eleanor laughed heartily at the remembrance of Miss Raymond, but she said that there was one great difference between her hesitation and Alice's slowness. For Miss Raymond's fears were mostly affected, while Alice was really very anxious to get on, but had only got into a slow languid way of thinking and acting from having been so long unwell, and never having been encouraged to overcome her indolence.

"But mamma says," replied Marion, "that her slowness proceeds partly from her not thinking of what she is doing."

"Yes," said Eleanor; "and Alice acknowledges that herself; she says that she is often dreaming about other things; and sometimes she is thinking how very stupid she is, and wishing very much that she were able to understand what she is to do; instead of thinking with *all* her thoughts about the things she wishes to understand."

"Alice and I had a nice talk with mamma the other evening about dreaming," said Marion. "Mamma told us about a young lady who used to dream away her life, as she says Alice will do if she does not cure herself of the habit just now. This young lady was warm-hearted, kind, and very anxious to help those she loved; but she was constantly thinking of other things instead of what she was about; so occupied in imagining situations in which she would do great things for her family, that she never did the very thing she was expected to do. When she was at school she wasted half her time in thinking how she would nurse her mamma night and day if she were ill; or what sacrifices she would make, and what efforts she would use to support her if she were reduced to poverty; neglecting all the time the means she had in her power of pleasing her mother, by attending to her studies. When she was married it was the same *thing; she* constantly forgot her every-day duties, and

while imagining circumstances in which she would do so much for her husband, she would be injuring him deeply by forgetting some important message or business he had entrusted to her. Mamma says that she should like much to teach all her little girls to practise the rule, 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy *might*.' She says that this is a positive command that God gives us, and that we break it every time we set lazily, unwillingly, or carelessly about any task. And then mamma said, that it would make her *so* happy to see us all acquiring the habit of doing cheerfully and heartily the work that is given us to do, doing it with all our mind and in the very best way. I like so much to hear mamma speak about these things; she speaks in such a pleasant tone, and so cheerily, it makes me feel inclined to jump up and set earnestly about something directly."

"Yes," said Eleanor; "and it makes me feel as if even disagreeable work would be pleasant, merely because it is something to do."

"We told mamma how much we liked to hear her speak about this," continued Marion; "and she smiled, and told us not to be contented with liking to hear about it, but to begin to act upon it immediately — not to-morrow but to-day, not in the next hour but in the present one. And she says that many

people deceive themselves in this way; when they hear any one talk very pleasantly and eloquently about activity of mind, diligence, and cheerfulness in duty, they are much pleased by the language of the speaker, and fancy that a change is begun in them already in these respects, because they are convinced and pleased by what he has said; but they never move a bit forward, only talk a great deal about these good qualities, and praise them. But oh, Eleanor," exclaimed Marion, interrupting herself, "what a beautiful wreath of the white convolvulus on that bank! I must get it for Alice."

And Marion immediately began to climb the bank to get the wished-for wreath. It was a difficult undertaking, as she had to make her way through the bramble and wild-thorn bushes which covered the face of the bank; she was often stopped by her dress getting entangled on some of them, but she was not easily discouraged, and she had almost reached the object of her wishes when a tiresome branch of hawthorn caught her frock. Eleanor's "Take care!" was unheeded; she gave an impatient jerk, and tore her frock from the waist nearly to the hem without disentangling it from the obstinate thorn.

"How tiresome — how provoking!" she exclaimed,



Eleanor plucking the Convolvulus Wreath. P. 223.

tearing it more and more, and entangling herself faster in her impatient struggles to get free.

Eleanor climbed up to her assistance, and patiently and quietly disentangled the torn dress from one thorn after another.

"Thank you, thank you," said Marion, eagerly gathering her pretty wreath. "You are my good genius, Eleanor," she continued, laughingly, after they had accomplished in safety the somewhat perilous descent; "you soothe me when I am angry, and help me so nicely when I have got into a scrape. Mamma says we must learn always to do the work of the hour in the hour. I suspect the work of a good many of my hours should be, to acquire a stock of patience. But, as papa says, it is much easier to do a great deal of work out of doors than a very little in."

"Well," said Eleanor, laughing, "we have talked so much wisdom that I am quite tired of it; suppose we have a race with our hoops."

"Not a race, because we never could pass one another in the wood, but let us be what Harry calls 'a coach and four.' You shall be the leaders and I the wheelers. But first help me to pin up my poor frock, and to fasten my wreath round my bonnet."

And they set off merrily through the narrow wind-

ing walk, with many a stop and hindrance, and many a laugh at their own and their hoop's mischances. Mrs Graham was walking in their garden, and as they came near she threw open the gate that they might drive through. The sharp, difficult turn, before coming to the gate, was passed in grand style by both, but Eleanor, in looking up to thank her mamma, allowed her hoop to strike against the side-post, and Marion's fell against her.

"We are a coach and four, mamma," cried Marion.

"A very wet one, I think; pray, my dears, have you been taking a shower-bath?" asked Mrs Graham, smiling.

"Not intentionally, mamma," replied Eleanor; "but I dare say the trees and bushes have sprinkled us with dew in revenge for the unceremonious way in which we brushed past them. O mamma, we have had such a delightful walk, and talked so much wisdom."

"I am very glad to hear it, but you must make haste home to take off your wet clothes. O Marion, what a rent in your frock!"

"Yes, mamma, that was part of our wisdom."

"Part of your wisdom, to tear your frock, my dear? Then I must really request you to be wise as seldom *as possible.*"

"O mamma," replied Marion, laughing, "I do not mean that. But we talked very wisely about my impatience causing me to tear my frock."

"Well, *act* wisely now, if you please, by returning home immediately to get dry clothes."

The girls had been a little afraid that this would be a dull Saturday, because the boys were away, but they were very happy. For an hour or two Marion was not very pleasantly employed in mending her frock, but Eleanor remained in the house with her to finish a drawing, and Alice read aloud to them, so that the time passed quickly away.

"I have followed your advice, mamma," said Marion, as she folded up her work after every hole, even the most minute, had been faithfully darned; "I have followed your advice, not to be always looking at the end and thinking how much I have to do, but to go on steadily, trying to do each part as well and quickly as possible, and I have not found it nearly so tiresome as I expected."

Mrs Graham went out with them after luncheon, and they took a long walk. Gracie and Lewis accompanied them. Gracie rode on old Jenny; and Jenny's grave obstinacy in keeping her own slow pace, and her independence in stopping to eat whenever she chose, gave them a great deal of amusement; for chil-

dren are easily amused when they are in a good-humour and disposed to take everything contentedly.

The travellers were not expected until seven, and after dinner the girls occupied themselves in sorting some ripe flower seeds that they had gathered in the forenoon, and arranging them in a very neat box, or rather tray, which they had made with separate compartments for the different kinds.

They were so busy that they did not think it was nearly time to go out to watch for the dog-cart, when the boys burst into the room in the highest glee.

"How did you come without our hearing you?" cried the girls, "and you are surely very early."

"No," said Allen, "it is almost seven; but oh, girls, we have such a story to tell you."

"Tell us then directly," said Eleanor; "but first answer mamma, she has asked you three times if you have had tea, and where papa is."

"Papa is here," said Mr Graham quietly, as he entered the room. "Although we had tea at four o'clock, we shall be glad of more as soon as you please. One word, Allen, before you begin your story, to relieve mamma's anxiety about Willie M'Kenzie. I have seen him, and he has promised me to come home immediately if his father desires him to do so; *but I think* I shall try to persuade the old man to

allow him to go to sea, for his heart is so set upon it that I feel sure he will never settle at home. Now, Allen, tell our wonderful narrative."

Allen gave a somewhat lengthened description of their drive to A——; of their breakfasting at the inn; of their going down to the pier; of the difficulty of getting any tidings of Willie M'Kenzie; and of their at last meeting a man who had seen him, and who undertook to find him and to send him to Mr Graham.

"While he went for him," Allen continued, "we all sat down upon some logs on the pier, and were much amused watching the unloading of a vessel, and the landing of the passengers. After all the passengers had come on shore, some of the sailors came out of the vessel, and one of them was followed by a funny-looking little dog, shaved like a poodle, and all covered with tar. We did not look much at him, for papa was explaining some part of the vessel to us; but the dog came running up to papa, snuffed about him, and seemed very happy to see him. Still we were too busy looking at the ship to notice him, and as he was very dirty, papa scolded him, pushed him away, and even threatened him with his stick. He moved away a step or two from the stick — stood still looking at us — opened his mouth—showed his teeth—and snacked

them. Harry, Georgie, and I exclaimed, at the same moment, 'It is Mussie's snack.'"

"Mussie!" exclaimed Mrs Graham and the girls in different tones of joy and surprise.

"Yes," said Mr Graham, "it was Mussie. As soon as he heard his name he came forward to us again, jumping up upon one after another, and snacking his teeth as if he meant to break them in pieces. The boys did not know what to do for joy. They took him in their arms, kissed him, and I rather think both Allen and Harry cried with joy."

"Well, I could not help it," said Harry, "it was not merely joy to see dear Mussie again, but he was so happy himself, he seemed so crazy with joy, that it just made the tears come into my eyes, to see how much he loved us, and how well he remembered us."

"Poor Mussie!" said Mrs Graham, "and to whom did he belong, or how did he get there?"

"I think that he must have been stolen," replied Mr Graham. "The man with whom he came on shore denied all knowledge of him, and said that he did not belong to him. But we went on board to see the captain, and he told us that he certainly belonged to that man. He had brought the dog on board about a twelvemonth ago, and Mussie had gone backwards and forwards with them ever since. The captain said,

that at first he was very unhappy, but he was a great pet with all the sailors, and had latterly been very contented, only he had heard his master say that he could seldom venture to take him on shore, for that he always tried to run away; and he added, 'If that man says he does not belong to him, you can take him away, for he does not belong to any one else.' Poor Mussie! I must say with the boys, that there was something quite affecting in his transports of delight at seeing us all again."

"But where is he? Did you bring him home?" were the next questions.

They had left him in the hall in order to give mamma and the girls a surprise. Eleanor and Marion ran out to the hall directly. All the servants had heard the news and were crowding round the favourite, while he was going from one to another, snacking his teeth and breathless with delight. He ran to meet the girls as soon as he heard their steps, and Eleanor stooping down to caress him, he jumped into her lap, licked her hands and neck, and looked, as Harry had said, almost crazy with joy. Dirty as he was, he was taken into the drawing-room; every good thing they could think of was given to him, and he got scarcely any rest all evening from the children caressing him. He fell at once into all his old habits,

up before the boys to their room at bedtime, and went to his own corner; and when they came home from church the next day, he had come to meet them at the old place.

A good many wistful looks were directed towards Sunset Cottage during the next week, but upon the whole they were tolerably happy and contented. It was very fine weather, and they took one or two nice long walks with Mr and Mrs Graham. The corn was cut down, so that many new walks were accessible to them; new at least to Alice and Douglas. Mussie was of great use in helping to make the week pass away pleasantly; it was a great amusement to watch how quickly he resumed all his former habits, and recognised his favourite rabbit-holes.

His determined pursuit of rabbits had made them at first a little anxious about the safety of their own pets, but Mussie's discreet behaviour soon dispelled their fears. The first day they took him with them to the rabbit-house, he did seem a little inclined to seize one of them; but he soon understood Allen's grave "No, no, Mussie," and never again showed any desire to harm them. On the contrary, he amused the children much by constituting himself a governor over them. The children were in the habit of allowing *them* to run out on the grass while they were clean-

ing their house, with one of the girls to watch them. But as soon as Mussie understood the business, he took that office upon himself, lying down with his nose on the ground and his eyes intently fixed upon the rabbits; and if any one showed an inclination to stray too far, he walked quietly in front of him, showed his teeth, and gave one short bark, which had always the effect of sending the offender scampering back to the house for safety.

The young people found an occupation that lasted for one or two days of this week of banishment. It was making a new gate at the bottom of their garden, and a neat little foot-bridge across the Karn opposite it. This gave them a much more direct path between the garden and the house than they had had before; for the little stone bridge was higher up the river than either the garden or house. And as they often remained rather too long among their flowers before breakfast, it was a great advantage to them to have a shorter way to go. On Friday they returned to the building of their house with renewed vigour, and made great progress. The walls were completed, and when Mr and Mrs Graham saw it they admired it even more than the children had expected.

"You have really taken so much pains with it," said Mr Graham, "and have done every part of it in such

a workman-like manner, that I should be sorry if you were not as successful in the thatching your roof, and making the door and windows; so if you like, I will give you M'Pherson for two or three days, to assist you in these more intricate parts."

The young people were not at first quite sure that they should like any assistance. They thought it would be so delightful to finish it all by themselves; but on more mature consideration, they determined to accept Mr Graham's offer. They were very anxious to insure the house being quite finished by uncle Percy's birthday, when they expected a visit from him, and when they purposed having a feast in Sunset Cottage.

CHAPTER XIII.

TEMPER.

MR and Mrs Graham were to dine with Mrs Wilson on the Saturday, which reconciled the young people a little to their engagement.

"You will keep us in order, mamma," said Eleanor; "for I am very much afraid that we shall be tempted to behave ill, they are such provokingly formal creatures."

"You will have plenty of time to behave ill if you wish to do so, Eleanor," said Mrs Graham, smiling; "for you will be there some hours before we go. But I hope that you will all take care and keep a strict watch over yourselves. I am not at all afraid that you will do what we forbid you, because we are not there to see you; but I am very much afraid that you may be cross and impatient if the Wilsons are very disagreeable."

"I think that is very likely, mamma," replied Elea-

nor; "for I have no patience with such stupid, formal girls as Maria and Eliza seem to be."

"But you ought to have patience with every one, my little girl. You will do no good by getting angry, but only make yourself unhappy. Try to remember that it is only for a few hours that you will have to bear with them, and do it cheerfully and good-humouredly."

The Wilsons were certainly very disagreeable children,—selfish, quarrelsome, and peevish. There was, however, a little English girl there whom our young friends liked much better. Emily Greville was an only child, and had been as much indulged as the Wilsons; but she was a much more engaging child. Clever, lively, frank, and warm-hearted, spoiled as she was, it was impossible not to like her. She took a great fancy to the Karnford children, and expressed her feelings with all the frankness and energy of her disposition; so that they were quite delighted with her, and even rejoiced on her account that Mrs Graham had asked the Wilsons to dine with them on the following Thursday.

"Well, have you been as miserable as you expected?" asked Mr Graham, as they drove away from the door.

"O papa, the Wilsons are very disagreeable—so

rude and selfish, they never seemed to think at all about what we should like to do, but only about what they wished to do themselves."

"Then they quarrelled so much with one another," said Allen; "we had scarcely any play at all, because they never could agree upon a game to play at."

"And when we went out to walk," said Marion, "they complained so much about every little thing—about the sun—about the dust on the road—about the grass being wet with dew; and they could not climb a stile, or they were frightened for cows."

"I think," said Mrs Graham, "that I know *one* other little girl beside the Wilsons, who sometimes complains about everything; who finds the sun too hot, and in the shade too cold, the road too dusty, and the grass too wet."

"O mamma," said Marion, blushing deeply, "I have never complained so much since that miserable day when we went with the Lindseys to Karnside Castle, and papa sent me to sit in the carriage alone, because, he said, I made every one uncomfortable by my complaints. I shall never forget that day; I was so unhappy sitting in the carriage, and so ashamed to see you when you came back. Do not you think, mamma, that I have been more contented since that day?"

"Yes, my dear Marion, I think you have. But I think that when you have yourself experienced how difficult it is to overcome a discontented and grumbling spirit, you ought to have more compassion for these little girls, who have perhaps never been shown the folly and sinfulness of it. You know, Marion, that both papa and I had spoken very seriously to you several times without any effect, until the sorrow and shame you felt that day made you more careful afterwards."

"But there was one person that we liked very much, mamma," said Eleanor, "and that was Emily Greville. She is such a kind, merry girl, and so ready to give up her own wishes for others."

"She has so much fun and so little nonsense," added Douglas, "she is not afraid of anything, and never makes difficulties."

"Oh, she is a very nice girl; do not you think so, mamma?" asked Marion.

"I think, my dear, that she is a very pleasing little creature, but I think that she has been too much indulged, and is very self-willed."

"O mamma, you would not have called her self-willed if you had seen how pleasantly and good-humouredly she gave up her strong desire to go to the top of the hill, when we said that Alice was tired," said Eleanor.

"Yes," said Alice, "and after she had chosen hide-and-seek, she gave up at once when Douglas said that he liked prisoners' bars better."

"Still I must call her self-willed, when I remember how totally she disregarded her mamma's injunctions not to go out without her bonnet. She did not look sulky, and say, 'I will, mamma,' as Eliza Wilson did; but she equally disobeyed her mother, running out, as she did, with a merry 'Never fear, mamma, I shall not catch cold.'"

"Still, mamma," said Eleanor, "I think she is more thoughtless than self-willed."

Mrs Graham shook her head. "My dear Eleanor," said her papa, "you are blinded by the charm of Emily's manners. She is a merry, good-humoured girl, but I do not think that she has much idea of doing anything but what she pleases; and I fear that she is as little actuated by principle in all she does as the sulky Wilsons are."

"O papa," exclaimed two or three of the children at once. "We cannot think that. She is so kind that she would not willingly give pain to any one; now the Wilsons tease one another, and refuse to do anything any one asks them to do."

"I acknowledge that Emily has naturally a much more amiable temper than the poor Wilsons, but I can-

not agree with you in saying, that she would not willingly give pain to any one. Did not she give her mamma pain by going out against her wishes; and do you not remember how she teased Eliza Wilson at dinner-time, by turning her into ridicule until she made her cry?"

"But, papa, Eliza really was very absurd during our walk."

"That is very likely, but was it for any good end that Emily gave that long laughable account of her fears; or do you think, Eleanor, that your mamma and I would not have been much displeased with you if you had teazed Eliza as Emily did to-day? Emily liked you, and willingly and kindly gave up her own wishes to please you, but did she ever give up her wishes to please the Wilsons?"

Eleanor could not say that she had; on the contrary, she remembered that she had thwarted and contradicted them about everything.

"I see, papa, that it is difficult to perceive Emily's faults, but still I do not understand why you wish us to perceive them."

"Because, my dear Eleanor," said Mr Graham, very solemnly, "there is scarcely anything so dangerous as to learn to think lightly of sin. If you begin by ad-

miring Emily so much that you are blinded to the real nature of her faults—call her disobedience thoughtlessness, and perhaps look upon her total forgetfulness of everything but her own pleasure as gaiety and lightheartedness, then I should tremble for you. You would soon learn to find excuses for your own sins; and unless checked and aroused by some bitter trial, you would become like your friend, trusting in the natural goodness of your own heart as your only guide, and forgetting altogether that your sole business in this world is, to glorify God, and to be made fit to dwell with Him for ever."

The house-building proceeded merrily and quickly, with M'Pherson's help.

He was an excellent superintendent, always willing that the children should try their own little plans where they were practicable, and where they were not, helping them to find out their error for themselves, instead of dictating to them. He explained to them his reasons for every rule he gave them, so that they might be able to judge in any new case; and that, as Allen said, was a great comfort.

"I dislike so much," he said, "to be taught to do anything, by merely getting a set of formal rules without any reason for them; so that I can never find out

what to do in a difficulty, but have to go back to my teacher for a new rule, which will, perhaps, after all, only serve for that one case."

"It is so difficult to remember mere rules, too," said Douglas; "but when you know the reason for them, then you can easily remember them."

"Yes," added Harry; "I like M'Pherson much better as a teacher than old Thomas, the gardener. When I ask Thomas for any advice about my garden, he tells me to do so and so; then if I ask him why I must do it, he stares at me and says, 'Deed, Master Harry, I canna tell you why, but just because you maun do it.' Then I say that is no reason; and he says it is, so he gets cross, and I get angry, and call him 'an old fool.'"

The children laughed at Harry's vehemence, and M'Pherson said, "You go and tease Thomas at wrong times, when he is busy and has not leisure to attend to you, and then you get angry and call him names, which makes him more unwilling to answer you the next time."

"At any rate, M'Pherson, I never call you 'an old fool.'"

"You had better not," replied M'Pherson, laughing; "for if you do, I will certainly tell my master."

"*Indeed*, you would not, M'Pherson, you would

never be so cross; it is all very well to say that you would do it just now, but I know very well that you are too fond of us ever to tell tales upon any of us."

"I hope that I am too fond of you ever to conceal your faults from your father and mother. Dearly as I love you all, I know that they love you still more, and would never give you unnecessary pain; and I am sure that they know much better than I do, when a fault deserves punishment, so do not trust to my not telling. I rather think I once got you punished, Master Harry," he continued, smiling.

"Oh," replied Harry, "I know what you mean—when you told papa about my striking John; but that was an injury done to another person, now I am sure that you could never make up your mind to tell of an injury done to yourself."

"Indeed, I would; for my reason for telling would not be because you had injured me, but because you had done wrong."

Alice returned to the discussion about giving rules. She could not agree with the boys, she said; she liked much better, both in work and lessons, to have a certain positive rule given her to follow; for then she could go on following it exactly, and feeling sure that all was right, even although she did not understand it.

"But that is a very lazy way of getting through work, Alice," remarked Eleanor.

"And a very bad way," said Allen, "because I am sure that you can never remember all the rules you learn, and if you do not understand them, you will never be able to recall the meaning of them to your mind after you have forgotten the words."

"Oh, I daresay that you are all quite right," replied Alice, laughing; "but still I cannot help feeling that it is a great comfort to be told exactly what to do and how to do it. In arithmetic, which you know is the most difficult of our lessons to me, I mean, I should never get on at all if I were to wait, as Harry does, to understand all the reasons why the rule was made, before I began to follow it. That is all very well for clever people, but it would never do for slow people, we would take so long to learn every rule."

"But then, Alice, look at the difference," said Douglas; "you were much sooner ready to begin your sum to-day than Harry was, because he waited, as you say, to find out the reason of the rule, before beginning to practise it. But in a few months after this, when you have both forgotten it, Harry can find it out in a minute or two, while you must seek for your book, find out the rule, and learn it over again."

"Besides," said Allen, "you might perhaps wish to

work the sum up here where you have no book, or in a shop, when you wished to ascertain how much you ought to pay for something. Imagine, Alice, how ridiculous it would be, to say to the shopman, 'I have forgotten the rule by which to find out what I owe you, but I shall go home, look in my arithmetic-book, and then come back and pay you.'"

All the children laughed heartily, and Alice joined them very good-humouredly, but she said "that she was not convinced. She could not help thinking that it would be a great waste both of her own time and her uncle's, if she were to pause as long over every rule, as she would require to do before she could find the reason for it."

"But, I am sure, Miss Alice," said M'Pherson, "that your uncle would not think that a waste of time if it taught you to exercise your mind more. Being satisfied to follow rules without understanding them, is a sleepy way of learning lessons. Any one can do that with only half his mind busy."

"Well, M'Pherson, I rather suspect that is just my case. I do use only half my mind, but I am trying to get the better of it, for it grieves both uncle and aunt."

"You are quite right," answered M'Pherson; "it is a very bad habit to get into, that of doing things with your mind half asleep, or busy with other things."

"That is the reason why you let us try our own plans, is it not?" asked Harry.

"One reason; another is, that I know that young people like to try their own plans, and so I am willing to allow you to try them when they are at all good."

"Which Harry's plans are not always," said Marion, looking archly at him. "Do you remember the duck story, Harry?"

The Grahams and M'Pherson laughed, while Alice and Douglas begged to hear the story.

"Last spring," said Marion, "a pond was made at the back of the poultry-yard. The ducks did not at first understand it, as they had never been accustomed to anything better than the little trough under the pump, so Peggy used to drive them in every day to teach them the way. We used to help her, and very fine fun it was; for the ducks did not understand that we were doing it for their good, and they tried to escape in every direction; then we chased them out of their hiding holes—they quacked and waddled, and we shouted and ran, and so we used to get them in. Well, one day Peggy showed us a fine brood of young ducklings, new out of the shell; very proud of them was the old hen that had hatched them, and very proud of them was Peggy. We admired

them very much, but when we had all gone away with Peggy, except Harry and Georgie, they began to think that it would be a good plan to give these young ducks a bath as well as the old ones. So with a great deal of trouble they got them to the edge of the pond, and with two sticks pushed them gently in one by one. The little creatures swam very well, but they wanted to get out much sooner than the boys thought right, so whenever one came to the edge they poked it back with their sticks. Soon they began to swim slower and slower; Harry fancied they seemed to be a little tired, and thought that perhaps they had better let them out now. But, alas! none came to get out, they were too weak to swim to the edge again; one popped under water, then another. Harry cried to Georgie to run for Peggy while he went into the pond to help them out. Two more sunk before he could get them all out, and the others looked so tired and cold Harry feared that they were going to die too. Poor Harry! he was most anxious for Peggy to come, and yet he was half afraid to see her. At last he heard her voice speaking angrily to Georgie, 'Ye jist poked them back a wee, ye say, and what garred ye do that?—to think of your murdering my bonny wee craturs in that senseless gait.' Harry stayed to hear no more—he ran away, and when Peggy reached

the pond she found four dead bodies floating in the water, and the others half dead with cold on the bank. The next time she saw Harry she said, 'Aweel, my man, ye may be guid at a hantle things, but ye'll ne'er be a guid duck's nursery-maid.'"

Marion told her story very well, mimicking Harry's look of terror when he saw the ducks sinking, and Peggy's wrath and her broad Scotch; and all the children laughed except Harry. Allen saw that Harry did not like the laugh, and he told the girls that they had better go away and take a walk, adding that they were of no use there.

"We have done you a great deal of good to-day, you saucy boy, in making the place tidy," said Eleanor.

"There is nothing more to do now," said Douglas; "so you may go up the hill to meet aunt and uncle, and ask them to come here, and see how much we have done."

"Oh yes! do go," cried Georgie, "and take Mussie with you, he is quite tired of this work."

"Is Garry here?" asked Eleanor. "It is so amusing to see them together."

"Mussie has a thorough contempt for Garry," observed Harry. "When first he came back he tried to *teach* Garry where the best rabbit holes were, but ever

since he found that poor Garry had no notion how to catch rabbits, and, indeed, was rather frightened at them, he has evidently looked upon him as a perfect fool, of no use except to be jumped over, and teased, when he cannot get us to play with."

"Mussie is a bit of a fool himself," remarked Douglas; "he stood for half an hour last night under the large fir-tree, barking at a wasp's nest."

"Oh, but there is something so amusing in Mussie's folly, I think he does these things on purpose to make us laugh."

"Do you think that he tumbled over the sunk fence the other day to make us laugh, Harry? Oh, how funny he looked when he got up, not quite sure what had happened to him, whether he had broken his legs or not."

"When was that?" asked M'Pherson.

"We were chasing Muss on the lawn," replied Allen; "he made a sudden turn at the very edge of the sunk fence, and tumbled head over heels into the park."

"But he can jump over quite well," said Harry.

"He does it sometimes when he is in a great hurry to get to us in the park, but he does not like to do it," replied Allen. "It is very amusing to see him hesitating, whining, and running backwards and for-

wards, as if he were trying to find an easier place, then making a spring, and when he gets up, running off, wagging his tail, and snacking his teeth, as much as to say, 'Am not I a clever dog?'"

"Now, away you go, girls," cried Douglas.

"I will try to find some work for you before to-morrow," said M'Pherson, as they turned away.

"What kind of work?" asked the girls, eagerly, coming back.

"You shall see to-morrow," was M'Pherson's smiling answer.

"Tiresome, M'Pherson! When you know that I have no patience! I cannot wait till to-morrow."

"What will you do then, Marion," asked Douglas, laughing, "if you *cannot* wait till to-morrow and M'Pherson *will* not tell you to-day?"

But Marion did not hear him, she had started, off upon a race with the dogs, as a means of getting rid of her impatience. When Eleanor and Alice overtook her, she was gathering some wild flowers, and she proposed that they should try who could get the prettiest nosegay for Mrs Graham. The others agreed, and for some time they walked along in silence, each occupied in her search after flowers. When Eleanor and Marion came to the edge of the wood, Eleanor said, that they would not find any more flowers, as

they were going through some stubble fields, and as they must walk faster, or they would miss papa and mamma. Marion and she compared their bouquets, which were both very pretty, and then they waited for Alice.

"I wish Alice did not walk so very slowly," said Marion, knocking her foot impatiently against the paling. "I am so anxious to hear what mamma will say of her flowers, and which she will think the prettiest. I am sure that it will not be Alice's; she finds so much difficulty in clambering up banks, or jumping over ditches for the pretty ones. Oh, there she is; let me see your nosegay, Alice," she continued, running to meet her.

Alice held out, not a bouquet of flowers, but a beautiful bunch of leaves, varying from the brightest green and pale yellow, to rich deep brown and crimson. They were very tastefully arranged, and looked remarkably pretty.

"How pretty; how very pretty!" exclaimed Eleanor and Marion.

"How did you think of gathering them?" asked Marion. "Your nosegay is much the prettiest," and she looked discontentedly at her own, as she spoke. "Mine looks quite ugly beside it. I think I will throw it away."

"Oh no, Marion. It is very pretty," said Alice, good-humouredly; "but I think that it would be a good plan to divide my leaves between your nosegay and Eleanor's. Your gay, bright flowers will be well set off by my sombre leaves."

"No, indeed, Alice," said Marion; "you are far too kind to me when I am petted, but I will not take your leaves. Your nosegay is the prettiest, and you must have the pleasure of giving it to mamma yourself."

"Let us put them all together, then," said Alice. "Yours and Eleanor's will look much better mixed. She has too much scarlet, and you have too much purple."

This was agreed upon, and sitting down on the stile, Eleanor soon arranged the three bunches into a very pretty nosegay. It wanted nothing, they all said, except a few large green leaves round the outside. They looked on all sides, but saw nothing that would do, until Marion espied some growing close to the hedge in the stubble field. They went into the field to get them, but found a ditch between them and the leaves. Marion was sure that she could reach them, by standing upon a stone that she saw in the middle of the ditch. Eleanor advised her to take off her *shoes* and stockings, and then if her feet did get wet,

it would not signify; but Marion was too intent upon getting the leaves that very moment to listen to her advice, so she prepared to put one foot cautiously on the stone, to ascertain if it were steady or not. Eleanor held her hand that she might be able to help her if her foot slipped, but when she found that the stone was steady, she took away her hand, and stretched forward eagerly to get the prize. Alas! the treacherous stone was firm only on the side she had first stepped on, and now, when she leaned the weight of her body on the other, in endeavouring to reach the leaves, it turned over, and Marion fell on her face, on the opposite bank.

As there was no danger, and she was not at all hurt, the other girls could not help laughing at her comical appearance. Her frock and hands besmeared with a thick black mud, and some even on her face and the inside of her bonnet. But their laughter became quite uncontrollable when Marion drew out first one foot and then the other without a shoe, both sticking fast in the mud. There was something so ludicrous in the whole thing, and in Marion's doleful "What am I to do without my shoes?" that it was quite irresistible. Marion got angry, her temper was injured by the accident, and to be laughed at was intolerable. But it was in vain that Eleanor and Alice tried to

compose themselves. Whenever they attempted to speak, the absurdity of the whole scene came across them again, and they laughed, until they could not stand. Marion's indignation increased.

"I really wish you would give over that foolish, unkind laughter," she said, beginning to cry, "and try to help me. I am sure I cannot get home without my shoes."

Her tears sobered them, and they tried to look grave. Eleanor said, that if Alice would take hold of her frock to keep her from falling, she would try to fish out the shoes with a stick. A second catastrophe had nearly happened here, for Eleanor was seized with a silent fit of laughter while she was stooping over the ditch, which infecting Alice, they both almost tumbled in.

At that moment, Mr and Mrs Graham made their appearance at the stile. Marion immediately began a bitter complaint against the girls for being so cross as to laugh at her, instead of helping her.

"Indeed, Marion, we could not help it," said Eleanor. "We tried to keep from laughing. I have got a pain in my throat from trying to be grave. But it was so funny to see first one shoeless foot come up, and then another."

And there was another burst of laughter from the

girls, so hearty, so uncontrollable, that Mr and Mrs Graham could not resist it, but laughed with them. Marion gave way to a fresh fit of crying, saying that they were very, very unkind.

"Come, come, my little Marion," said Mr Graham, kindly, "you must not be foolish, the girls do not intend to be unkind. Dry your eyes, and laugh too, and I will try to get your shoes for you."

Mrs Graham offered to wipe some of the mud off Marion's bonnet; but Marion turned sullenly away, and would not make any effort to recover her good-humour.

"Nay, Marion," said Mr Graham; "if you are sulky and cross, we shall leave you to help yourself. I am not surprised that you felt a little cross at first; it was as natural for you to do so, as for the girls to laugh. But they are making strong exertions to be grave; let me see you exert yourself as much to laugh. I am sure it is not a thing to cry about," he continued, in a pleasant cheerful tone.

Marion turned from him as she had done from her mamma.

"Very well," he said, "we shall go home and leave you. Come, Alice and Eleanor."

"O papa! O uncle! do stay and help her. Indeed, Marion, we are very, very sorry that we laughed,

do not be angry; look up and dry your eyes, and papa will get your shoes."

Eleanor stooped down and put her arms round Marion's neck, as she sat on the bank, but Marion pushed her away, and when Mussie, seeing that she was in distress, came to speak to her, she struck him with all her force.

Mrs Graham took Eleanor's hand and led her gently away. They all passed over the stile, and proceeded homewards. Eleanor and Alice were very sorry, they felt as if they were to blame for Marion's crossness, and they were anxious to know how she could get home. When they came to Sunset Cottage, and the boys heard the story, both Douglas and Allen begged to be allowed to go to Marion, that they might help her; but Mr Graham preferred sending M'Pherson, as he feared that the boys would be too kind to her, even although she were still sulky.

Marion did not at first believe that her papa and mamma would really leave her; but when their voices and the sound of their footsteps died away, and she found that she was actually alone, she began to think that she had been very foolish. If she had only tried to keep down the angry feelings when they first arose, and had tried to laugh with the others, she might have been going home quietly and happily with them now,

—instead of that she had displeased both her papa and mamma, and made them leave her alone, and what was she to do? She rose and went to the ditch; she saw where her shoes were, but without some one to help her, it was impossible for her to get them. She looked all round to see if any one was near; but no one was in sight. She then tried how she could walk without shoes; she got on pretty well on the soft grass by the side of the ditch, but she had to cross a part of the stubble field to get to the stile, and she found that the sharp straw hurt her feet so much, that she was forced to give it up.

Oh, how bitterly she lamented her folly and crossness, and how firmly she resolved never to be so foolish again, but to try every means in her power to overcome the irritability and impatience of her temper. These wise resolutions, however, would not help her home, and she was just preparing to make another attempt to get to the stile, when she saw M'Pherson come up to it. She called to him in a very humble voice, asking him if he would be so good as to try to recover her shoes. M'Pherson came forward very willingly, when he found from her tone of voice that her ill-temper was subdued. He soon got up her shoes and brought them to her, but they were of little use, they were filled with mud; and even after M'Pherson

had cleaned them with grass, they were so soft from the water that she could not get them on. Marion very nearly began to cry again, but she remembered her resolution to be patient in difficulties, and only asked M'Pherson in a very sad voice what she was to do.

M'Pherson made a kind of shoe-horn for her of a piece of wood, and with some difficulty one shoe was got on; but no exertions could get the other one up in the heel, and she must try to walk home as it was. M'Pherson gave her a piece of string to tie round her foot, so as to keep the shoe on, but she had a very uncomfortable walk, and she often wished that she had followed Eleanor's advice, to take off her stockings and shoes. She told M'Pherson, as they walked along, how foolish she had been, and how she had resolved to look henceforward at the laughing instead of the crying side of any little misfortune. M'Pherson said that was a very wise resolution.

"When any little cross happens," he said, "the best plan is to try every way to remedy it, and if you cannot, why then just submit cheerfully, and make the best of it; but crying never helped any one yet, and never will."

"Do not you think, M'Pherson, that it is a good *sign of* my being able to keep my resolution, that I

am not fretting just now, although my shoes are really very uncomfortable?" M'Pherson hesitated. He said that it was so far a good sign, but advised her not to be too confident in herself. He warned her that little accidents would often come so suddenly and so provokingly, that the wise resolution and everything would be forgotten; and she would begin to cry and fret before she remembered. He said that it was often easier to go on bearing a long trial well, than to submit to a short, sudden one.

They were all at dinner when Marion reached home, and after she had dressed herself she could not make up her mind to go into the dining-room. She thought that she should feel and look so awkward and foolish, going in among them all; the servants would see that she had been crying, and in short she would rather lose her dinner than go down.

In the meantime, Mrs Graham began to feel a little uneasy at her not making her appearance. When dinner was nearly over, she asked the servant if she had not come, and hearing that she had been home for some time, she desired one of the children to go up and invite her to come down. Harry was the one fixed on to take this message, as they thought that Marion might feel awkward at seeing either Eleanor or Alice. But after being away for some time he re-

turned without her, she was so sorry and so ashamed that she could not come down.

"You had better leave her alone, then," said Mrs Graham, "and we will go out to walk."

The children all begged that, as the evening was very mild, the walk might be put off until after tea, when perhaps Marion would join them. Mr and Mrs Graham consented, and they went to learn their lessons. Harry made another attempt to persuade Marion to come down to the study at least, but in vain; she said that she could not do it, and his mamma, who met him returning from his fruitless errand, again advised him to leave her alone.

"Please mamma, allow me to take up some of her lesson books, that she may learn them just now, and then perhaps she will go out after tea."

"You may do it if you like, Harry, but I do not think that she deserves it. She is both foolish and selfish in refusing to come out of her room when we all wish it."

Harry, however, persevered in his kind attentions to her, and when tea was ready they all entreated Mrs Graham so earnestly to send up one more invitation that she yielded to their wishes. Allen tried this time, but in vain, Mrs Graham said that she would remain *at home* while the rest went out to walk, and that she

would keep some tea for Marion. Douglas ran up to tell Marion that the tea things were still in the drawing-room, and begged her to go down and take some after they had gone out.

Marion was by this time very hungry, and could not resist the invitation; but when she opened the door and saw her mamma sitting there, she felt inclined to run away again. Her mamma smiled.

"Come in, Marion," she said, "and if you are so terribly afraid of seeing any one I will turn my back to you, and go on with my work. Will that do? or, must I leave you quite alone?"

Marion saw that her mamma was laughing at her, and she came in and sat down to eat, feeling a little angry as she considered her shame and sorrow for her fault to be very meritorious.

Mrs Graham did not speak until Marion had finished tea, but then she turned round and said more gravely,

"I want to speak to you, my little Marion. It has vexed both papa and me to see that you are not really sorry for your behaviour to-day."

"Mamma, I am *very* sorry," said Marion, reproachfully, tears rising in her eyes. "It was because I was so sorry and ashamed that I did not come downstairs."

"My dear Marion, if you had been really sorry for having displeased papa and me, and for having been cross to the girls, do you think that you would have refused to do what we wished you to do? I have no doubt that you felt sorry, but it was a selfish sorrow. You were grieved that you had placed yourself in an uncomfortable position, — grieved that you had shown yourself to be a foolish petted child,—grieved perhaps, too, because you were forced to blame yourself; but real sorrow for having done wrong would have made you very earnest to find some means of making amends, and would have prevented you from yielding to the repugnance you felt to come downstairs to us when we wished it."

"But indeed, mamma, I *could* not come down, I was so ashamed."

"O Marion! you must not talk nonsense; you know that you could have come down if you had wished to do so," said Mrs Graham, smiling.

"But, mamma, I could not *wish* to do it. It was so disagreeable to think of seeing you all again."

"I can quite well understand that, Marion; I can quite well understand that you would feel awkward and foolish, and would dislike very much to come amongst us again. When I sent an invitation to you to come to the dining-room, I did not think that it would be

pleasant to you to come, but I did hope that, feeling sorry for having grieved us, you would be anxious to do what was unpleasant to yourself in order to give pleasure to us."

"Mamma, I did not know that my coming downstairs would give any of you pleasure. I thought"—

"Take care, my little girl," said Mrs Graham, earnestly interrupting her. "Take care that you do not say anything that is not *exactly* true. Did Harry, in his visits to you, say nothing to lead you to believe that we were anxious that you should join us? When he was trying to persuade you, did he not urge that it would make them all happier if you would consent? I think he would use some such arguments."

Marion did not answer; but she cast down her eyes and blushed deeply. Mrs Graham continued with much earnestness and affection.

"My dear Marion, I have observed this want of accuracy in you before, and it grieves me much. Your dislike to being found in the wrong leads you sometimes to plead as an excuse what is not *quite* true. You will try to watch against this, will you not, my dear, and pray to God to make you perfectly sincere in thought, word, and action? You deceive yourself in these excuses, and persuade yourself that you have not committed sin when you have. Now you must

ask God to make you very jealous over yourself, to make you so fearful of sinning against Him as that you will desire, not to conceal your sins, but to find them out, in order that you may avoid them for the future."

Mrs Graham paused; Marion did not speak, but her eyes were full of tears. Mrs Graham saw that she was convinced and humbled; she put her arm round her, and drew her towards her, as she said tenderly,

"I think that you are convinced now, dear, that it was a selfish, not a sincere, sorrow that prevented you from complying with our wishes this evening; and do not you see, too, that it is this selfishness that makes you so unable to bear provocation of any kind? You think too much of the injury done to yourself, and not enough of the temptation to offend that the other party have had. You only thought to-day how disagreeable it was to you to be laughed at; and did not remember how natural it was for the girls to laugh. But I shall not say any more about this matter. You have had a great deal of pain and grief to-day from your impatience, and I think that you will not be so cross or foolish again."

"Mamma," said Marion, with a good deal of hesitation, "do you think that I am *very* selfish? more selfish than the others, I mean?"

"It is of no consequence to you, Marion, whether other people are more selfish than you or not. God says, 'Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.' And if you break this commandment, it will make you no better that others break it as often as you do, or even that many break it oftener. I do not think that your selfishness is very manifest; I believe that you are very often not at all aware of the selfish tendency of many things that you do. For instance, when you do a kind service for any one, you are very anxious that they should know the full amount of trouble it has given you to do it. If you were thinking only how to give pleasure to others, you would not be willing that they should know how much their pleasure has cost you. Again, you are often vexed if Alice or Eleanor do anything for me, because you would like to do it yourself. There is a kind of insincerity apparent in these instances as well as selfishness; your kind service has been done more that you may appear to be kind, than in order to give pleasure; you desire more to show *yourself* useful, than to save *me* trouble. When a girl thinks much about herself, it has a great tendency to make her endeavour to seem what she is not, and that, my dear little girl, is an additional motive for you to try to subdue your selfishness. You will

find it very difficult to do. It is not difficult to *seem* unselfish, but it is very difficult to be so in reality. And if you try to forget yourself, and to do everything from pure single motives,—from a desire to please God, or to do good to those around,—you will soon find that you cannot succeed in your own strength. But then, Marion, the God who has commanded you to 'consider others,' and to 'do all things to His glory,' has also promised that 'He himself will write His law upon your heart,' that He will enable you to do as He has commanded you."

"I think, mamma," said Marion in a low voice, "that you know very well what passes in my mind. When you or papa show me that I have been selfish or impatient, I feel so sorry; not because it is wrong, but because you think ill of me, and I try very hard for some days to be gentle or unselfish, only that you may think well of me. I think I see how wrong that is; and, indeed, mamma, I will try to be more anxious to do all things for God's glory, and I will pray to Him to help me."

"If this day's pain has taught you this, my own dear Marion," said Mrs Graham, "you may rejoice at the remembrance of it all your life."

CHAPTER XIV.

KARNSIDE CASTLE.

"M'PHERSON promised to find some work for us to-day," said Eleanor, as they were going up to the house next afternoon.

"There is M'Pherson before us," cried Georgie, "with a large bundle of rushes." The children quickened their pace and arrived at the cottage, just as M'Pherson had deposited his load at the door. They were eager to know what was to be done with them. M'Pherson made the boys help him to roll a trunk of a tree to the front of the house, so as to make a convenient seat for the girls. And he then explained that he intended them to make baskets and fruit plates of these rushes. He showed them how to plait them, described how they were to soften and smooth the plates, by first damping, and then ironing them; and lastly, he explained to them how they were to sew them together and shape the baskets.

The girls were delighted, and began their new work with great eagerness. The thatching was completed; M'Pherson and Allen began one of the windows, while the other boys were occupied beside the girls, in making a table.

"It is so provoking to think of these people coming to-morrow," exclaimed Douglas; "we are so happy working here to-day, and to-morrow will be such a tiresome day."

"But do not you think, Master Douglas," said M'Pherson, smiling, "that it is rather foolish to spoil your pleasure to-day by thinking about the tiresomeness of to-morrow's occupations?"

"But I cannot help thinking about it," replied Douglas.

"Oh yes, you can. Only try whenever the thought comes in, to chase it away with some very bright one. I have known people make themselves miserable, never enjoying the good that was present, but always thinking about some little trouble or vexation that might happen."

"But I assure you, M'Pherson, that this is very far from being a *small* trouble," said Douglas, laughing.

"Because you are determined to make it a great one, and I think you will most probably succeed in *doing so.* You will think so much about the vexa-

tions you expect to arise, that by the time they come, (if they happen at all,) you will be quite able to look upon yourself as a sort of victim; you will be as cross and unreasonable as you can wish, and will most probably get into a scrape of some kind."

"Why do you suppose that I wish all this to happen?" asked Douglas.

"Because you are taking the right way to accomplish it. You are fretting so much about these little vexations to-day, that, I am sure, they will seem very great ones to-morrow."

"But, M'Pherson," said Eleanor, "I think that when you have been expecting any little trouble, you can bear it much more patiently than when it comes suddenly."

"Oh," replied M'Pherson, "if you think that you will most probably meet with many little trials of temper to-morrow, and look forward to them with a quiet determination to bear them patiently and cheerfully, that is very well. But to set about imagining all that may or can happen in a discontented grumbling way, can serve no good end, but will only make you unhappy to-day as well as to-morrow."

"Still," said Allen, "I cannot help thinking that the visit of these people is a great misfortune rather than a little vexation, as you call it."

"Well, Master Allen, if you call a matter like that a great misfortune, I wonder what you would say if you were to break your leg; or if your papa were to be killed by a fall from his horse. You must invent some new terms, there are none in the English language strong enough for such accidents; when the spending a few hours in the company with two or three cross children, is worthy of being called a great misfortune." Allen laughed good-humouredly as he replied that M'Pherson was too particular.

"Because, Master Allen, I think it is a very bad thing to accustom one's-self to make so much of trifles. A boy who calls a visit of a few hours' duration a great misfortune, will not be likely to submit to the many trials he must meet with when he is a man. And you know that to murmur and repine at what God sees fit to send us is a sin in His sight."

"Do you think that it is really sinful to feel vexed and unhappy at such little things as this visit of to-morrow? I daresay it is foolish, it only makes matters worse."

"Tell me, Master Allen, do you believe that God orders everything that befalls us, the small as well as the great?"

"Yes, I do."

"Then, I am sure you must all acknowledge that

it is sinful to murmur at what God sends. I believe that one reason why we are more apt to grumble at little trials than at greater ones, is because we are more apt to forget that these little ones come from God too. When I hear people say, how tiresome, how provoking such a thing is, and how much they wish it had been otherwise, I often wonder that they are not afraid to speak in that way, when it is God who has ordered everything."

"I wish you could help us to find out some way of being contented to-morrow," sighed Douglas, "for in spite of all your reasoning, I think it is not a *little* vexation. You do not know what tiresome peevish children they are; nothing pleases them."

"Then, I am sure," replied M'Pherson, laughing, "I am much more sorry for them than for you. For you may be very sure that no one's peevishness or discontent is so hard to bear as your own, and none can make you more completely unhappy and uncomfortable."

Their conversation was interrupted by Mrs Graham's coming to Sunset Cottage with good news for the young people. Mr Graham had gone to Mrs Wilson's to ask her consent to the whole party going to see the ruins of Karnside Castle the next day. While the children were congratulating themselves upon this

pleasant termination to all their gloomy forebodings, M'Pherson gave a significant glance at Douglas, as if to remind him how uselessly he had been vexing himself.

After the children were all ready for dinner, they went to the front door to watch for Mr Graham's return. He had been successful, they were to go, and nothing remained to be wished for except a fair day on the morrow. Mr and Mrs Graham submitted very good-humouredly to the somewhat noisy discussion of plans, which lasted nearly all dinner time; but, after each separate point had been settled at least three times, Mr Graham began to tell Mrs Graham the cause of his being so late.

He had met an old college friend at Benholme; a gentleman whom he had not seen for many years, not since they both left college. Occupied as the children were with their own concerns, their interest was much awakened by Mr Graham's animated description of Mr Leslie.

He described him to be a man of most extraordinary talents and attainments, and yet so simple and unaffected both in mind and manners, with such a warm heart, and such winning frankness and good-humour, that Mrs Graham and they all expressed great joy at the prospect of seeing him on the next day. The children listened attentively while Mr and Mrs

Graham spoke about the great usefulness of such a man; how his steady religious principles, his clear judgment and great activity, and earnestness of mind, all helped to make his talents eminently useful. And Mr Graham told in glowing language all that he could, and did do for the good of man and the glory of God, dwelling with the eloquence of deep feeling upon the blessedness of thus dedicating all our energies and talents to the service of our God and Saviour.

"I should like very much to be that man, uncle," exclaimed Douglas, with a kindling eye and a glowing cheek. "I should like to be respected and admired as Mr Leslie is; and only think how delightful it would be if some one were to speak of me with as much enthusiasm as you do of him."

"Very delightful, Douglas," replied Mr Graham, smiling; "but Mr Leslie would not be such a noble character, if his only aim were to be respected and admired. It is, my boy, the singleness of heart with which Mr Leslie devotes himself to the advancement of God's cause, that makes me feel and speak about him with so much respect and enthusiasm. He forgets himself altogether, and appears to remember that he has singularly great endowments, only to feel more solemnly the responsibility under which he lies to use them aright."

"But, uncle, even if I had that single-hearted desire to do good for its own sake, what chance do you think I should have of ever being like Mr Leslie? I should like so much to be a great man."

"You know, Douglas," answered Mr Graham, "that I have often told you that you have very good abilities indeed; but before you can hope to rival Mr Leslie, you must be a great deal more constantly industrious and persevering than you are, and a great deal more patient in overcoming difficulties."

"Tell us, papa," said Allen, "all the qualities we require to make us as great as Mr Leslie."

"A very modest request, Allen!" answered Mr Graham, smiling. "I cannot promise that any of you will ever equal him, for his mind is a very uncommon one, uniting great quickness and clearness of judgment, with steadiness and perseverance. But it is not of so much importance to you to inquire how you may be as eminent as Mr Leslie, as how you may improve to the utmost the talents that God has given you. Be very faithful in using your greatest exertions to do everything you are required to do in the very best way; even though it be only to learn a lesson in geography, history, &c., take care that it be perfectly learned; you should do everything as quickly as you can too, and give your whole mind to what you are about."

"Go on, papa, please tell us something more."

"Oh! try to practise these rules first, and then you may ask for new ones. You will not find it so very easy to be earnest, diligent, and attentive, as perhaps you think it is. But it is time for you to go to your lessons, and remember," he continued, smiling, "to *practise* my rules, and not to *think* about them so much as to make you unable to attend to what you are doing."

The next morning immediately after breakfast the party set off,—Mr Graham, Marion, and the boys, riding; and Mrs Graham, Alice, and Eleanor, in the carriage. They were to drive first to Benholme for some of the Wilsons' party, and the girls were a little anxious to see who were to be their companions. Mrs Greville, Emily, Eliza, and Maria Wilson were waiting for them; both Eliza and Maria declaring that they could not go in the servants' seat behind, the other three girls begged to be allowed to sit there together. Mrs Graham made no objections to it, and they formed a very merry trio. Emily was certainly a remarkably amusing companion, eager and animated about all she saw, and so frank in expressing her thoughts and feelings. Once Eleanor thought that she was wrong, in telling them some very absurd stories about the Wilsons. But when Eleanor told her that she thought she

ought not to do it, Emily took the reproof so good-humouredly, that both the girls were quite delighted with her, and they reached their journey's end in great harmony, and mutually pleased with one another. The riders had taken a shorter road and were there before them.

At first the party kept together, looking at the ruins, but the young people soon began to weary of the slow pace at which the elders moved, and Allen asked if they might go by themselves, as he knew all the dangerous places. Mr Graham gave his consent at once, only desiring Allen not to go through any part of the left wing; but Mrs Wilson said that she should be much happier if her children remained with her. Eliza and Maria were quite willing to think that the young party would be too boisterous for them; but James said rudely that he *would* go, he was determined that he should not stay with the old people.

"Oh, we can all stay, then," said Allen.

But James declared that if they did he would go by himself; he had no notion of losing all the fun, merely because his mother had taken one of her foolish fancies. Mrs Wilson then asked the others earnestly to go with him, trying to hide his self-willedness by giving her consent, and acknowledging that she was too easily alarmed.

The children ran merrily up and down winding stairs, through long narrow passages and into curious small rooms, until they came to a long gallery with a strong oaken door at the farther end. Marion went towards this door, saying that that was the way to the most curious place of all; but Allen stopped her and told her that his father had forbidden them to go there. Marion merely remarked, that she was very sorry, as she wished to show Douglas the dungeons, and she was turning away, when James Wilson said, "I *will* go at any rate, and you can come with me, Marion."

"Oh, I will never think of going if papa wishes me not," said Marion, laughing.

"*Wishes!*" said James, with a sneer; "*commands*, you mean."

Marion did not answer, she coloured very much, for she did not like to be laughed at even by a silly boy.

"Well," said Harry, "*commands*, if you like the word better. What do you find to laugh at in that?"

"Only that I would not be dictated to in such a way if I were you; that is all. But you are such a good tame animal, you do all you are bid, and never think of going anywhere without asking papa's or mamma's leave."

James spoke the last words in a slow drawling tone,

as if he intended to mimic Harry, and he concluded with such a provoking laugh, that Harry's hot temper could not stand it, and he said hastily,

"If I am a tame animal I am sure you are more like a wild bear than anything else," and he pointed to James's rough hair and disorderly clothes.

"What business have you to call me names?" replied James, angrily, coming up to Harry with his hand raised to strike him. Douglas stepped between them, exclaiming, "Keep quiet, Master James! Harry has too much of the tame *gentleman* about him to fight before girls."

"And as to names," said Allen, also coming forward, "remember you began first."

"Oh, I am not going to fight you all three," said James, turning sulkily away. "Cowards! to set three upon one."

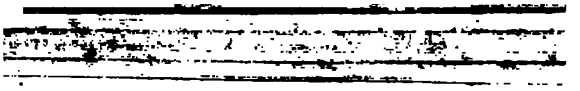
"We have not set upon you," began Douglas, warmly, when Allen interrupted him, saying in a contemptuous tone, "Oh, leave him alone, Douglas, he is not worth minding."

"Am I not!" cried James, making a sudden spring at Allen; "I will soon teach you that."

He was taller, but not nearly so strong or active as Allen, who, after wrestling with him for a minute, turned him over on his back on the floor. He



The struggle between James and Allen. P. 233.



placed his knee on his breast so as to prevent him from rising.

"Promise to be peaceable and not to disturb us any more with your nonsense," he said, "and I will let you rise."

"Let me up, I say," cried James, fiercely, struggling to rise.

"Not till you promise," said Allen. But, "Let me up, I say," was the only answer he could get.

"Give me your handkerchief, Douglas," said Allen.

Douglas did so; and Allen having got hold of both James's hands, proceeded quietly to tie them together, tying them first with the handkerchief and then with a piece of twine which he took out of his pocket. James struggled violently, but Allen had such an advantage over him that he accomplished his purpose.

"Will you promise now," he said, laughing, "and I will free you?"

"No," roared James; "but I will be revenged on you yet."

"Well, you may get up now," said Allen, rising, "and I will help you."

As soon as James was on his feet he ran away downstairs, leaving all the others laughing at him. They proceeded merrily on their tour through the house,

congratulating themselves on being rid of such a troublesome companion.

James in the meantime was going through all the different parts of the house seeking his mother and Mr Graham. After a long search he found them on the green in front of the ruins, where they were waiting for the children, that they might go together to seek a good place to take luncheon in.

The appearance of James alone, and with his hands tied, excited a great deal of surprise. He gave a very false account of the whole affair, declaring that he had done nothing, but that the others had teased him all the time he was with them, and at last, because he had remonstrated with Allen for going into the left wing where they were forbidden to go, Allen had thrown him down, and with the help of the others had tied his hands, and would have locked him up in one of the rooms if he had not got away.

Mrs Wilson looked both frightened and angry at such treatment of her son. Mr Graham, after looking keenly at James for a moment, asked where the others were, saying that it must be inquired into, for, if it were true, he should be very much displeased with his own children.

"Do you doubt my son's word?" asked Mrs Wilson, a *little* indignantly.

"You surely would not condemn any one unheard, Mrs Wilson?" he replied, with a quiet smile. "But there are the children," he continued, as they made their appearance at one of the windows, and he beckoned to them.

"You need not ask them," said James, in a whining tone, "for as I left them I heard them say they would tell you such and such a story if you asked them about it."

"I never found out any of my children in telling a falsehood," replied Mr Graham, again fixing his keen penetrating eyes upon James, who turned away from him.

Mrs Wilson sighed as she thought that she could not assert that of James, and she would willingly have persuaded Mr Graham to let the matter drop, as she began to fear that some exposure of her son might take place. Mr Graham said very decidedly that if his children had disobeyed his orders, he could not pass it over.

The young people now came on the green, and Mr Graham called to Allen to come forward. He did so immediately, although he could not help smiling when he saw James.

"Did you tie James's hands, Allen?" asked Mr Graham, in a very grave tone.

"Yes, papa, I did," replied Allen, looking up at him with his usual open frank expression.

"Why did you do so?" continued Mr Graham.

"Because he tried to fight first with Harry and then with me, and he would not promise to be quiet; so I thought it would be a good plan to tie his hands and prevent him from troubling us."

Mr Graham could hardly refrain from smiling at the quiet simple way in which Allen said this.

"Did you do or say nothing to provoke him?" he asked again.

Allen considered for a minute, and then said, "that he had told Douglas to leave him alone, for that he was not worth minding."

"And what did Harry and he quarrel about?"

Allen smiled as he replied, "James called Harry 'a good tame animal,' and then Harry called James 'a wild bear,' because he is so untidy."

Mr Greville and Mr Leslie laughed outright, while Mr Graham merely said, "You should not have provoked him, Allen. It was not right. James tells a different story, too. Tell Allen your story, James."

James turned away, saying sulkily that it was very hard he was not to be believed as well as Allen, and that he would not tell it over again.

"At least," said Mr Leslie, "explain to us how you

knew which was the left wing, and also how you heard what they arranged to say while you were running away from them."

James only looked more and more sullen, while Mrs Wilson, by her deep blush and her entreaties that no more might be said, plainly showed that she did not believe her son.

Mr Leslie said, "He did not think that it was fair to the Grahams to let the matter rest, unless James would acknowledge that Allen's account was correct. He should like, he said, to ask Douglas if it were true that he and Harry held James while Allen tied his hands."

"Do you say that?" exclaimed Douglas, coming forward in the greatest indignation. "You know it is a lie, you coward, and"——

"Be quiet, Douglas," said Mr Graham, authoritatively. "You must not speak in that tone. If you please, Mr Leslie, do not say any more," he continued, feeling sorry for Mrs Wilson. "My boys have done wrong; but I think you are all satisfied that James's story has been exaggerated."

"I am afraid that he has not told quite the truth," said Mrs Wilson, with much embarrassment. "He was so angry; he was so—," and she stopped, unable to find a good excuse for what was so manifestly a falsehood.

"Well, then," said Mr Greville, "Allen is cleared, and so no more need be said." And he proposed that the young people should separate in three detachments, and try which of them could find the prettiest and most convenient spot for a luncheon-room.

Mr Graham endeavoured to get the Wilsons to join in this; but James continued very sulky, and would not be reconciled to any of the boys. Maria and Eliza, after some hesitation, agreed to go, and the three parties separated, settling that Mr Graham was to whistle for them at a certain time, on hearing which they were all to return, and describe the different nooks they had chosen. Allen found that Emily, Georgie, and he, were to go together; and that the route appointed to them lay round to the other side of the castle.

"I am so glad," said Emily, as they set off together, "that we have not those tiresome girls Maria and Eliza in our party."

"I am sorry for the others, though," replied Allen; "they will not enjoy their walk, and neither Alice nor Douglas have ever been here before."

"Oh, never mind them," said Emily, laughing. "Let us rejoice that *we* are free to enjoy *our* walk."

"But I do mind them very much," replied Allen,

bluntly; "and I wish, Emily, that you would not speak in that way. Always, when I am beginning to like you, you say something that makes me dislike you again."

"You are very polite, Allen," said Emily, good-humouredly. "But tell me what things make you dislike me?"

"Oh, when you speak as if you did not care for anybody's pleasure except your own, I do not like you. But I will tell you what I do like in you very much,—your good nature."

"But, Allen," said Emily, colouring a good deal, "perhaps it is quite true that I do not care for anybody's pleasure but my own."

"I am sure that it is right for you to say what is true; but I do not think you should allow yourself to feel in that way. And, besides, Emily, if you think of it, I do not believe that you *really* do not care whether the others are happy or not."

"I suspect, though, Allen, that I think rather too little about others' happiness, either one way or other. However," she continued, more gaily, "it is not our fault that Eliza and Maria are not with us; it was their own choice. I heard Eliza say that they were afraid to go with you, you were so rude; and that

perhaps you might take it into your head to throw them down and tie their hands, as you did to James."

Allen reddened with anger, as he replied, "I am sure I would never touch a girl, whatever she might do to me. But perhaps they could not know that," he added more quietly. "Can you climb up this bank, Emily? I want to speak to papa, and I see him up there."

Emily consented, and they climbed up the steep bank, and found the other gentlemen with Mr Graham. Allen hesitated for a moment whether to speak to his papa or not, when he found that he was not alone. Mr Leslie was the first to observe them, and he said very kindly to Allen—

"Well, my boy, what do you want? Anything that I can do?"

"I only wished to ask papa if he is angry with me," Allen said, with some embarrassment.

"I can scarcely say that I am, Allen," replied Mr Graham, smiling; "for I can quite well believe that James was very provoking. Still I think that you ought to have been more careful not to irritate him, when you knew what a spoiled, fretful boy he was; and I also think that tying his hands was rather an extreme measure."

"But, papa, he was so very disagreeable."

"But, my dear Allen, do you think that we have any right to tie the hands of all the disagreeable people we meet?"

Georgie and Emily laughed heartily, and Emily said that she thought it would be very nice if we could do so.

"Very pleasant, Emily, if we were quite sure that no one could think *us* disagreeable, and desire to tie our hands," replied Mr Graham. "Perhaps some one may think that little girls who always take their own way are very disagreeable."

Emily blushed, while Mr Greville said, with a smile, "That is very fair, Mr Graham; Emily would be much the better of being under your charge for a time,—we spoil her."

Allen, Emily, and Georgie now proceeded on their walk, and in about half an hour the whistle summoned them back to the green. The others were there before them. The first party, consisting of Douglas, Maria, and Marion, described the spot they had fixed on. They had gone up the river, and had found a very pretty place, where, they said, the view of the opposite bank was most beautiful. But when questioned as to the convenience in the way of seats, shade from the sun, and shelter from the wind, they

were obliged to confess that they had overlooked everything but beauty.

Eleanor spoke next, as the representative of her company. They had gone through the old garden, and had fixed upon what used to be the bowling-green. The banks of the green formed very comfortable seats, and the high shrubs were a good protection from the wind, but there was no shade from the sun.

Allen and Emily now came forward. They had gone quite to the other side of the ruins, along a cart-road which wound round the foot of the hill, and had come upon what Allen called "a bay in the hill," with a wooded promontory on the one hand, a rocky one on the other, to shelter them from the wind.

"That sounds well, Allen," said his mamma. "But are there convenient shady seats?"

Yes, Allen said; there was a comfortable place under the shade of some rocks, where there was a fallen tree for some, and rocks for others to sit upon.

"We counted the number of seats," added Emily; "there are plenty of convenient ones for the old people, and such a delightful scrambling-place up above for us."

The place was found quite as convenient as they had described it to be, and the luncheon passed off very well. The Wilsons chose to consider themselves

ladies and gentlemen, and take the seats that were of easy access, so that our little friends from Karnford, with Emily Greville, had their "delightful scrambling-seats" to themselves, and were very merry. Both on their way to the luncheon-room, and afterwards, when the whole party set out on a walk through the wood, Allen tried to make friends with James Wilson, but quite ineffectually. Douglas told Allen that he thought it was very absurd for *him* to try to make up, when it was James who was in the wrong.

"But," said Allen, "papa thinks that we were a little wrong in provoking him."

"I think uncle is very unjust if he says so," replied Douglas, warmly; "he does not know how much provocation we received."

Douglas spoke in a loud voice, and his uncle, who was only a little way in advance, looked back.

"You should not speak ill of me, Douglas, behind my back," he said with a smile.

Douglas coloured, but he smiled too as he replied, "You can hear me, uncle, and defend yourself."

"Did you intend me to hear you, Douglas?"

"No, uncle, I would not speak in that way to you, but I did intend to ask you afterwards if you did not think that it was a little hard to blame us without knowing how much reason we had to do as we did."

"Oh, if you have good reasons to give, you may come beside me and tell me them now. There is no one here but Mr Leslie, and he likes to hear reason too."

Mr Leslie smiled, and seconded Mr Graham's invitation. The two boys joined them.

"Now, Douglas, for your reasons," said Mr Graham.

"Well, uncle, you know James was so provoking we really could not help it."

"Could not help what, Douglas—could not help James being provoking?"

"No, no, uncle; we could not help saying provoking things to him in turn."

"But, Douglas, that is the very point we are going to reason about. I say you both could and ought to have helped it, and I supposed that you were going to give me some very good reasons why you did not. What good did it do to call James a wild bear?"

"I do not know that it did any good, uncle, but Harry could not help saying it, James was so provoking."

"Poor Harry! I feel quite sorry for him; so he cannot keep his tongue from saying things of its own accord."

"O uncle," answered Douglas, laughing, "I do not mean that, but only that where one is much irritated,

it is very difficult not to say the angry words that come into one's head."

"Very difficult, I grant, but not impossible. Now, all I say is, that it would have been better if you had said and done nothing to provoke James, and that I hope you will watch more carefully another time. But I think that we have said more upon the subject than it deserves, so if you will acquit me of injustice, I will acquit you of anything worse than a little hastiness. Shall that be the verdict of the court, Douglas?"

Douglas agreed to this, and the boys spent half-an-hour very pleasantly walking with Mr Graham and Mr Leslie, and listening to their conversation. Mr Leslie was very kind in answering all their questions, in explaining to them everything that they did not understand. They had heard a great deal about the patient industry of some of the Swiss peasantry in carrying soil up the steep hills, in order to render a small patch of ground fit for cultivation; and they had many questions to ask Mr Leslie about it when they heard that he had been in Switzerland.

"I like the idea of it," said Allen, warmly; "I like to think of people setting sturdily and patiently about helping themselves, never minding the labour or difficulty if they can only accomplish their end."

"Well," said Douglas, "I am sure that is what I

never could do. I could never go on day after day toiling and labouring, and getting on so slowly that I could not see to-morrow what I had done to-day."

"Oh," replied Allen, "I should not like to plod on in that way if I could help it; but if I had a great object to attain, and saw some means of attaining it, although the road was long and difficult, and I could only creep at a snail's pace, I think I would begin the journey. I do like to help myself."

Mr Leslie agreed with Allen in his desire to help himself, but he said "that he thought a great deal of dogged perseverance was sometimes displayed by people who would not take the trouble to find out better means of attaining their objects, or who were too proud to learn from others."

"Still," said Mr Graham, "I must say that I like to hear boys say that they would rather find out things for themselves than be told. It may proceed from pride, but it is better than a lazy helplessness."

"Certainly," replied Mr Leslie, "and such boys always turn out the most energetic and useful men. I hope that my little friends remember that all their education is intended to fit them for being men, and for fulfilling God's purposes with them in this world." Mr Graham had walked on to speak to Mr Greville, and Mr Leslie continued,

"I think that both of you have a great deal to answer for. You have good natural talents, you have quietness and leisure to improve them aright, and you have the great advantage of such a father and guide as few are blessed with. Few fathers or uncles are so well fitted to teach or help their young charge as he is, and fewer still are willing to take so much trouble as he does. Now you must remember, that for every advantage you possess, you must give an account at the last day. Every book that you read, however foolish it may be, yet if it contains only a very little good advice, that little increases your responsibility. Even these few words that my great affection and esteem for your father have induced me to say to you, even they will be written down in God's book as a talent that you have received, and with which you are required to trade for His glory and the good of others. I am not afraid of disgusting you, my dear young friends, by speaking so solemnly to you, for I know that you are accustomed to have everything referred to God and to His will."

The boys did not answer him, but Mr Leslie saw, by the expression of their countenances, that they were grateful to him for his kind interest in them. Just then, they were summoned to join in a game of hounds and hare, for which the wood was very well adapted, and which lasted till it was time to return home.

"Mamma," said Allen, the next afternoon, when they had been discussing the events of the day, "I really do like Emily Greville very much, she is so good-humoured."

"Yes," said Eleanor, "I think she is very good-humoured. I told her yesterday that I thought she should not laugh at the Wilsons so much, and she was not in the least angry."

"Well," said Mr Graham, smiling, "I must confess I was more inclined to like her yesterday than on Saturday. She takes a reproof remarkably well; and considering how much she has been indulged, and how seldom she has ever been found fault with, I was a good deal surprised to see how good-humour edly she bore my hint about her self-willedness."

"Then, papa," said Marion, "you would not object so much now to our being friends, would you?"

"I am a good deal more inclined to like Emily, Marion; but, at the same time, I do not much regret that she is going to leave this part of the country, for I still think that hers is a dangerous character. The very good-humour that I have been commending tends, perhaps, to make her society the more dangerous. It is such an attractive quality, that it helps to blind one to her real defects."

"But, uncle," said Douglas, "I do not think that

Emily's example is so dangerous to us as to many others. We have little temptation to take our own way in opposition to your or aunt's wishes, both because we know very well that you would not permit us to do so, and also because you are both so willing to allow us to do anything that is at all reasonable."

"I do not much fear, Douglas, that you will be tempted to imitate her disobedience, or her carelessness of the feelings of others; but you know I told you, that the fault in Emily which grieves me the most is, that she makes her own will the rule of every action, and never appears to remember that there is a God to be pleased or displeased with all she does. And yet the kindliness of her disposition so often leads her to do what is right, that in her case we are exceedingly apt to forget the great sinfulness of thus setting aside God's will as the rule of her life."

"I think, uncle," said Douglas, after a few moments' pause, "I think that when I came here I was a good deal like Emily. I seldom thought of what I *ought* to do, but did what I felt inclined. At first I was much surprised at the good-humour and cheerfulness with which all here gave up their own wishes when they were convinced it was right to do so. Then on the very first Sunday, when Eleanor spoke so much about doing everything for God, and when you told

us that we ought to be kind and gentle for Christ's sake, I began to think I should like to try to live for God in this way. And do you not think, uncle, that I have improved since that time? and that I think much more about what God wishes and commands than I used to do?"

"I do think, my dear Douglas, that in many respects you are much improved, and I rejoice most sincerely in it. But you must beware of deceiving yourself, and of thinking that all is well, because in so far you are improved. 'A great change may have taken place in your habits and feelings, and yet you may, in God's sight, be as far from Him as you were before."

"I cannot understand that, uncle," said Douglas, quickly.

"My dear children," said Mr Graham, "this is a subject of the deepest importance to each one of us. There is no question in the world to which it is so important for us to get a true answer as to this, 'Am I a child of God, or a child of the devil?' and there is no question in answering which we are so apt to deceive ourselves. Remember, my dearest children, that this is a question which must be answered one day, either in this world or in the next; and try to *realise* that each one of you must stand all alone be-

fore the great God, and that then the question will be answered, but then the answer will be for ever."

Douglas sighed deeply. Mr Graham opened his Bible, and read with much solemnity the fifth chapter of the Romans. The children listened with deep interest. Douglas and Harry had been much impressed by this conversation, though still the rebellion and enmity of the natural heart struggled hard against conviction; Allen, Eleanor, and even little Georgie, young as he was, had been taught by God's Holy Spirit to know themselves to be lost sinners, and they listened to the free and gracious offers of pardon with feelings that none can understand but those who have been thus taught to feel their own guilt and utter helplessness.

Of Alice and Marion's feelings it is perhaps more difficult to speak. God's Spirit had been working with Alice before she came to Karnford, convincing her of sin; and she had received with great joy and trust her uncle and aunt's instructions as to the way of salvation by Christ alone. She often hoped that she had gone to Him and rested upon Him for pardon and strength; but her great indolence by making her remiss in working for God often caused her to doubt and fear that her faith was unsound. She was too apt, too, to forget that her salvation did not depend

upon herself; she required to learn to look more to Christ's full and finished work, and less to her own foolish weak heart. Poor Marion! She was naturally giddy, and easily affected either by good or evil. Mr and Mrs Graham had often hoped that their dear little girl's heart was touched and softened, and then the impression appeared to pass away. Marion was very apt to deceive both herself and others, because her great desire to be esteemed and admired often led her to do many things, and almost unconsciously to put on the appearance of good qualities that she did not possess.

CHAPTER XV.

UNCLE PERCY'S BIRTHDAY.

SUNSET COTTAGE and its garden were quite completed in about three weeks after their visit to Karnside Castle, and they really did the children great credit. The windows and door were very neat, and with M'Pherson's help they had made a regular boarded floor, which was a great improvement upon the clay one of the wood-shed. Then they had made a neat table, and some tolerably convenient benches. They had erected a remarkably pretty paling of willow twigs round the garden, and had gravelled the path leading to the cottage door, so that it all looked very well indeed.

Their most pleasant occupations had been cutting down trees, and lopping off branches in order to open up pretty views from various seats in their little territory. It was a very interesting business, and some-

turned without her,
that she could not
"You had better
Graham, "and we w
The children all l
very mild, the walk n
when perhaps Marion
Graham consented, an
sons. Harry made
Marion to come down
vain; she said that s
mamma, who met him
errand, again advised h
"Please mamma, allow
lesson books, that she
then perhaps she will go
"You may do it if y
think that she deserves
selfish in refusing to com
all wish it."

Harry, however, persev
her, and when tea was
Graham so earnestly to
that she yielded to their
but in vain, Mrs Graha
at home while the rest w

after, until the hour appointed for the feast.
to gather a dish of brambles yet, but
Harry agreed that they ought to defer
the time for eating them, in order
be fresh. After another sweeping, and
tion of every nook and corner, for
dust or untidiness, they sat down
to admire the view and to talk.
you remember this day last year,
Douglas."
"I remember it quite well. We spent the
Grandmamma, and the Ashburtons were
very stupid day."
"Though they are my cousins, I like
little as I do the Wilsons," said
the same reason, because they are
excited. At least the girls are;
fellow."
"He is," replied Alice, "and I like him very
Only I am sometimes a little afraid of him,
boisterous. I never know what he is going
wilder than our boys are?" asked Eleanor.
boys laughed heartily at her for asking that
when they were present, and Alice replied,
thought all the boys were sometimes as wild

times not a little difficult. First they had to decide upon the tree or branch to be sacrificed. Then they had to consult upon the best way of getting it down without injury to the trees that were intended to remain. And lastly, there was the execution of it, the sawing, cutting, pulling, pushing, and the anxious watching to see if they were to be successful. Sometimes tree after tree, branch after branch, would be condemned to the axe without producing the wished-for result; and then the cutting off one small branch would do all that they had been labouring so long to effect.

Uncle Percy's birthday came at last. Uncle Percy arrived about a week before. The morning was fine, and everything promised well for the long-talked-of feast. The young people were busy early in the morning; and before breakfast the apples and pears in their own garden had been gathered and carried up to Sunset Cottage. The house had been swept and dusted with the utmost care. The windows rubbed and scrubbed till Douglas laughingly declared that the girls would rub a hole in the glass. The wood for the fire had been piled ready for use; the potatoes cleaned, pared, and put into the pot ready to be boiled. In short, so much had been done before breakfast, that they had some difficulty in knowing how to pass the

time after, until the hour appointed for the feast. They had to gather a dish of brambles yet, but even impatient Harry agreed that they ought to defer that until nearer the time for eating them, in order that they might be fresh. After another sweeping, and a strict examination of every nook and corner, for any concealed dust or untidiness, they sat down on one of their seats to admire the view and to talk.

"Do you remember this day last year, Alice?" asked Douglas.

"Yes, I remember it quite well. We spent the day with grandmamma, and the Ashburtons were there. It was a very stupid day."

"Although they are my cousins, I like the Ashburtons as little as I do the Wilsons," said Douglas; "and for the same reason, because they are so affected and conceited. At least the girls are; William is a fine honest fellow."

"So he is," replied Alice, "and I like him very much. Only I am sometimes a little afraid of him, he gets so boisterous. I never know what he is going to do next."

"Is he wilder than our boys are?" asked Eleanor.

The boys laughed heartily at her for asking that question when they were present, and Alice replied, that she thought all the boys were sometimes as wild

as William, but that she was not so much afraid of them.

"When you are wild," she said, "you jump over palings, climb trees, or chase Mussie; but when William is wild, he begins to play tricks on other people, and it is that that frightens me. In ordinary times he is very kind, and would be sorry to vex any one; but when a wild fit seizes him, he seems to forget everything and everybody."

"Well," said Allen, laughing, "I often feel as if I could not rest without doing something wild, and the only way to keep from doing mischief is to take a long run, or get upon the ponies and gallop round the park without saddle or bridle, or some such thing."

"Papa used to call our leaping-poles our safety valves," said Harry, "because he thought that running about with them, leaping over bushes, hedges, and ditches, was such an excellent way of getting rid of some of our superabundant spirits."

"A race down hill with a few somersets at the end is not a bad way," remarked Douglas.

"No, it is a very good way, and so is a run after Mussie," said Harry.

"But your wildness never makes you play tricks on other people," said Alice.

"Papa would not allow us to do so," said Harry.

"O Allen! do you remember that day at Miss Buchanan's?"

"What was that, Harry—what was that?" asked Alice and Douglas, both at once.

"Miss Buchanan," replied Harry, "has a very silly niece, Clara Buchanan. Both she and the Lindseys' tiresome cousin Jane, whom we have told you about, are very much afraid of ghosts; and one rainy day when we were all at Miss Buchanan's, they would not consent to play at hide-and-seek among the uninhabited rooms, because they were so much afraid. Well, we were all very angry, and we determined to play them a trick. Eleanor and Sophia Lindsey undertook to wile them into a long gallery, out of which there was a door leading to these rooms. They were to coax them to go in at the doorway, and then to let the door close. It had a spring, and could only be opened on the gallery side, so Eleanor and Sophia were to show them that there was no help for it, but that they must go through the ghostly part. They were to lead them wrong, then slip away from them, and Allen was to come in dressed like a ghost."

"What a shame!" cried Alice.

"So it was," answered Allen; "it was wrong, very wrong. But we did not believe that they were really frightened; we thought that they were only pretending

to be so, in order to prevent us from doing as we wished; and we were very angry, and in short, we did not think much about anything but our own amusement."

"But how did it end?" asked Douglas.

"Very unhappily for us," answered Allen. "I was stealing along one of the dark passages; I had a plate full of burning spirits in my hand, in order to make what was uncovered of my face look very ghostly. I had stopped for a moment to listen if I could hear them coming, when I felt some one catch hold of my arm. I supposed it was Harry or Willie Lindsay, and without venturing to turn towards him, as I was afraid I might spill the spirits, I whispered, 'What is the matter?' There was no answer; I turned round in great surprise, and saw papa. I had never thought before that we were doing wrong at all; but as soon as I saw papa's face, I felt that it was cruel and wrong in every way. I could not speak to him; I could not look at him, he looked so sternly and fixedly at me, and there was such a dead silence. I turned away my head, and saw Mr Herbert with a lantern in his hand; he looked grave too, but not so stern as papa did. At last papa spoke in such a cold displeased tone, and asked me, What was the meaning of that dress? I remember that I felt glad when he spoke, and yet I

did not know what to say. Oh, it was a bad business altogether."

"How did uncle find it out?" asked Alice.

"He and Mr Herbert were going through some of the rooms to look at a curious old carved roof," replied Eleanor. "They came upon Harry and Willie immediately after Allen had left them, and they heard them talking and laughing about it. Papa questioned them, and when he understood the plan, he sent Harry to stop us, and he and Mr Herbert went to seek Allen."

"And was he very angry?"

"Yes, indeed he was," answered Allen. "I remember so well, he said so sternly that it was a shameful and cruel plan in itself, and was accomplished by artifice and deceit."

"Yes, I remember," said Eleanor. "When I told him that I had not thought about its being cruel, he answered in a tone of grave displeasure, 'You knew, at any rate, Eleanor, that nothing could justify deceit, and yet you employed it—and for such a purpose.' Oh, I was so much ashamed, and so sorry; I do not know what I would not have given to have been able to undo it all again."

"But, Eleanor," asked Alice, "did you say anything that was untrue?"

"Not exactly untrue, perhaps; but quite as bad.

When we asked them to go to the gallery to see a particular picture, we certainly wished them to believe that we meant what we did not mean; and we also intended them to believe that the shutting of the gallery door was an accident."

"Papa has such a hatred to anything like deceit, that Eleanor's doing this vexed him more than any other part of the business," said Harry. "I remember that upon Miss Buchanan pleading that Eleanor would not intend to deceive, Eleanor answered in such a firm but sad voice, 'I must have intended it, or I could not have hoped to get Clara and Jane to go with me.' And then papa's grave, stern look softened a little, and he seemed less displeased."

"Oh yes," said Marion; "papa and mamma hate anything in the least degree approaching to artifice. I remember one day, when the Lindseys were here, a new fence was found broken in a part of the park, to which we had been forbidden to go. The forester accused us of doing it, and papa summoned us all in to ask about it. Willie at once acknowledged that he had forgotten, and had gone to the forbidden place; but denied having touched the paling. Papa believed him, but the forester did not; which made Sophia very angry, and she tried to prove that it could not have *been* Willie. I do not remember what she said; I only

remember that, although she said nothing that was untrue, yet she purposely omitted telling one little thing which had a suspicious appearance against Willie. This came out, and after the forester had gone away, papa turned to Sophia and told her very gravely, but kindly, that not even the desire to free her brother from undeserved blame, could justify her in using artifice."

"But," said Alice, "she did not say anything that was untrue."

"She intended papa to believe that she was giving a full and correct statement of *all* the facts, while she purposely concealed a part, and that was artifice."

"Still," objected Douglas, "when she knew quite well that it was perfectly true that Willie had not done it, she was not bound to tell what might lead my uncle to believe that Willie had done it."

"Oh no, Douglas, that is not right," said Allen. "In giving an account of anything, we have nothing to do with the effect it may have upon other people's minds, we are bound to tell the facts exactly as they happened. If papa had questioned Sophia, she need not have done more than give a true answer to each question; but when she volunteered to give him a full account of the whole, she was bound to conceal nothing."

"Papa says," continued Eleanor, "that people often

begin to acquire habits of exaggeration in this way. In telling a story, they are so very anxious to convey a certain impression to the mind of the person they are speaking to, that they almost unconsciously exaggerate one part, weaken another, and perhaps omit a third. The impression they desire to convey may be quite correct, but their history is not so, just upon this account. And papa says, 'Be perfectly exact, perfectly sincere, and straightforward in all things. Never appear to be what you are not, or to think or feel what you do not; but be more anxious to speak and act truly, than to make others think you are doing so; or to make them think you clever, or wise, or good.'"

"Well," said Harry, "I have liked Clara Buchanan better ever since that day. She came forward and entreated papa to forgive us, with so much earnestness and kindness, that she quite forgot to be affected."

"I remember another time when she forgot to be affected; it was when the gardener's child was so severely burnt. None of the servants would do any thing to the burns until the doctor came, because they were so very sore. But when Clara heard her old nurse (who was too ill to go herself) say that oil ought to be applied to them, she went down and anointed them all herself with a feather dipped in oil; although

she used to pretend, or rather to imagine, that the sight of any sore made her faint."

"Oh, she must be better than the Ashburton girls," said Douglas. "They are thoroughly tiresome creatures, able to do nothing but to sit dressed in fine frocks, and look pretty."

"Had you no nice companions in London?" asked Harry.

"Oh yes," replied Alice; "the Walsinghams are very delightful girls, so kind and so merry, a good deal like yourselves."

The little Grahams laughed at Alice's compliment, and Allen remarked, that he really did not think they had much merit in behaving well, for they were seldom left to their own discretion; and whenever they were beginning to go wrong, his papa or mamma, he said, were always ready to help them into the right way again.

"I think that uncle and aunt have such a nice kind way of keeping us from doing wrong," said Douglas. "When my uncle gives us an order, he tells us so distinctly what we are to do, that we cannot make a mistake; and he speaks so decidedly, that we feel there is no use in trying to disobey him."

"Yes," replied Allen; "and both papa and mamma are so glad to say 'Yes,' and so sorry to say 'No,' to

any request we make, that I think we should be very bad indeed if we were to disobey them."

"Well," said Douglas, "but it is not merely because you do all that you are bid that I think you are better than most other boys and girls; but there is so little quarrelling among yourselves — everything goes on so smoothly."

"Only sometimes, Douglas," said Eleanor, laughing. "I think that if we had not been afraid to quarrel—because if we did, papa would have kept us from the house—there would have been a good many quarrels, particularly in making these seats."

They were all sitting upon one of the new seats, and as Eleanor said this, a loud crack was heard; the seat went suddenly down at one end, and they all rolled off, one above the other. No one was hurt, and it caused a great deal of merriment; although they were a little vexed at their seat being rendered useless, as it was one of the prettiest; and they had planned that Mr Percy, and Mr and Mrs Graham, were to sit there after the feast. This interrupted their conversation, and they dispersed to complete their preparations. The boys and Marion went to gather brambles, while Alice and Eleanor remained to boil the potatoes. Marion had such a quick eye, that the boys said they must have her with them—Harry assert-

ing that she belonged to the bird tribe, she was so quick and sharp, that no poor solitary bramble could ever escape her.

The long talked-of feast passed off remarkably well. Mr Percy admired the cottage, the table, the seats, and the rush plates, as much as they expected; and the potatoes and fruit were excellent. Mr Percy and Mr Graham had witnessed the downfall of the seat from a walk a little farther down the hill, and they were curious to know what important subject they had been discussing with such earnestness at the time.

"Oh," said Allen, "we were only trying to find out how it is that we are so much better than other children."

"Are you quite sure of the fact, Allen?" asked Mr Graham, laughing.

"Alice and Douglas say that we are," answered Harry. "But, papa, we agreed that all the merit of our good behaviour is due to mamma and you. You watch over us so carefully, and check us when we do anything wrong."

"I think you are right in that, Harry," said Mr Percy. "I think that you have less excuse than most children for behaving ill."

"But do not you think, papa," asked Douglas, "that they do behave better than most children?"

Mr Percy smiled. "Really, Douglas," he said, "I can scarcely answer that question; my visits to Karnford have been so short, that I have had little opportunity of judging. I will say, however, that I think my little nephews and nieces are, in general, very good-tempered, and very easily pleased, and these are always agreeable qualities. At the same time, I have seen one or two faults in each of you which will require care and attention on your own part, as well as on the part of those who have the charge of you. Shall I tell you what I have seen?" he continued, looking round with a smile.

"Oh yes, papa, and we will tell you whether you are right or not."

"No, no, Douglas, I do not think that you will be very fair judges of your own characters. But, if you please, I shall give you an instance of each fault. The first day I came on this visit, I was sitting in the study, and you young ones were in the dining-room, arranging some flower seeds. The door was open, and I heard your conversation. All went on pleasantly for some time, until Harry accused Marion of having put some lupin seeds into a compartment where there were seeds of the sweet-pea. At first Marion said that it was not she who had done it; and when Allen proved that it could have been no one else, she said that the

lupins used always to be in that compartment, and that it was wrong to put the sweet-peas there. Allen answered with a provoking smile, that *of course* Marion was always in the right; and Marion with much warmth denied the imputation. I saw here, on the one side, a want of consideration and forbearance for the infirmities of others; on the other side, an impatience at being thought in the wrong." Both Allen and Marion blushed and cast down their eyes.

"I think," said Mr Percy, "that I have given a sufficient proof of my penetration, and this is not a pleasant topic of conversation."

The children, however, begged him to go on, and he continued,—"I admired Harry's candour and honesty in coming last Monday to tell his papa that he had disobeyed his orders not to make his pony leap the new ditch, and I liked particularly the plain, straightforward way of telling it, without attempting to excuse himself. But I thought that if the heedlessness that caused him to forget the prohibition was not subdued, he might do many things in after-life that would cause him bitter sorrow and remorse.

"Then, last night Douglas got very angry because he was found to be wrong about the kings of France. We perhaps triumphed too much, but he deserved it, he was so positive before he discovered his error.

"Alice has made great progress in her efforts to overcome her old enemy, indolence, but I think she must see herself that a good deal remains to be done yet. Eleanor's good temper, unselfishness, and cheerfulness, make her such a favourite, that I am almost afraid to point out a fault in her lest you should all attack me; but the keen quick sense she has for the ridiculous sometimes makes her a little satirical. Georgie is a quiet, kind little fellow, who never forgets to bring me the newspapers at the very time I like them best, but I have seen too little of him and of our merry little elves, Gracie and Lewis, to be able to give a judgment on their characters."

There was a silence for a few minutes after Mr Percy had concluded, for each of the children felt a little awkwardness in being the first to speak. At last Douglas said, "Well, I only know that I have never liked any people so much as I do my cousins, and I never was so happy anywhere as I have been ever since I came here."

"I am glad to hear you say so, Douglas," answered Mr Percy, "as your uncle and I have almost decided that it will be the best plan for Alice and you to remain here during the winter. I am so often away from home that I cannot attend to your education myself, and if you do not remain here, I must

send you to school. I shall be able to see you as often or oftener here than at school, and shall feel much more sure of your being well cared for."

"Oh, thank you, papa," and "I am so glad," was heard from all, the Grahams rejoicing as much as the Percys.

"But is it not quite settled?" asked Alice, a little anxiously.

"I suppose I may say that it is; it was to be decided partly by yourselves, and as you are anxious to remain with your cousins we may conclude the business. But, my dear Alice and Douglas, I am very anxious that you should both feel solemnly that your being here brings a heavy responsibility upon you. This is not only the time for improving your minds by diligent attention to study, but also for improving and softening your hearts and tempers. You tell me that your cousins are better tempered, more kind and obliging, than any other children you ever met with; but you must be anxious to derive benefit as well as pleasure from their society. If you bestow particular pains upon any one of your plants, sheltering it from cold winds, taking care to give it proper proportion of water, and, as far as you can, of heat and sunshine, you expect that it will reward your care by fine flowers, or plentiful fruit. Now your heavenly Father,

in His kindness and care for you, has brought you into this pleasant home, where all is happy and peaceful around you. There are no disagreeable rugged tempers here to irritate or cross you; no harshness or severity to make you reserved and deceitful; but there is the bright sunshine of kindliness and affection to nourish good and gentle feelings in your heart. And when you leave this favoured garden, you must bring forth fruit to that kind Father who has thus highly blessed you, and endeavour by kindness, gentleness, unselfishness, and cheerful contentment, to make others sharers in the happiness you have enjoyed. All children ought to remember that this is one great object they ought to keep steadily in view, during the happy years of childhood; and if you think yourselves particularly favoured in this respect, then your responsibility is the greater, and the fruit you bring forth ought to be proportionably abundant. I am not afraid to tell my little friends here, that I think their natural tempers are particularly happy for themselves and pleasant to all around them. For I know well that they have been taught to consider these good tempers as gifts from God. But I should like to press them as well as you to consider seriously the great advantages they possess over others, and to remember that they are only the Lord's stewards, and

are bound to expend these talents in His service and for His glory. Great forbearance with those who have naturally unpleasant tempers is required from you; great consideration and tender pity towards them. But am I not talking too gravely for such a cheerful occasion?"

"No, uncle," said Eleanor, "we like to hear you speak in that way when you speak so clearly, and make us feel so sure that you are right."

"You must take care, though, Eleanor, not to rest satisfied with liking to hear about these things, with talking about them, and yet forgetting to practise them. This is a kind of self-deception we are liable to in all things, and particularly in the one great concern of our life—in religion. To you," he continued, turning again to his own children, "I speak with great earnestness, because I feel that I have too long neglected you in this respect. My Alice was seldom with me; Douglas I saw only for a few minutes in the day, and in my anxiety for your temporal welfare and happiness, I overlooked the attention I ought to have bestowed upon your religious instruction. I believed that you were well cared for in all things by those to whose charge I had committed you, nor was it until I saw, during my first visit here, the great change that had taken place, that I was convinced that you had never

been properly instructed before, and my eyes were opened to my culpable neglect. I hope, my dear children, that you may never have cause to feel such bitter sorrow on account of neglected duty, as I have in this respect."

This serious conversation made the children all a little grave, and Harry and Douglas were much struck with the agreement between Mr Percy's solemn warning and their conversation with Mr Graham upon the same subject. They had often thought of what he had said to them, and Douglas in particular had often felt alarmed at the thought that no such change had taken place in his heart. But hitherto he had always put the thought away from him, repeating that he certainly had no enmity to God. His father's words, enforcing so strongly the same doctrine, now startled him a good deal, and, by the blessing of God's Holy Spirit, his mind was somewhat enlightened as to his real condition in God's sight.

CHAPTER XVI.

APPLE GATHERING.

THE month of October is often a very pleasant one. The oppressive heat of summer is gone, the air is bright and clear, with as much coolness as makes exercise of every kind a pleasure. It is a busy and entertaining month in the country too, there is so much to be done, both in the garden and field. Our party at Karnford enjoyed this October very much. They were often busy in their gardens, and in transplanting rose-trees and shrubs up to Sunset Cottage; and they took much longer walks than they had been able to undertake during the hot weather. Mr Percy remained during the first week of the month, but was obliged to leave them on the next, promising, however, to return at Christmas.

One morning after Mr Percy's departure, Harry came

into the dining-room and announced, in a very significant manner, that M'Pherson thought, from the appearance of the sky, that there was going to be a great deal of wind, and that, therefore, all the fruit remaining on the trees ought to be gathered immediately.

"Very well," answered Mr Graham, quietly, without looking up from his book. "I suppose M'Pherson knows that he may gather them whenever he pleases."

"Yes, papa, most probably he does," answered Eleanor, laughing. "But you know what Harry means by telling you. We have always had a holiday on the apple-gathering day, in order that we might help, and I am sure that you cannot intend to refuse us one this year, when Alice and Douglas are here."

Mr Graham smiled good-humouredly as he replied, "That he should not like to deprive them of their amusement as they had been looking forward to it. They might help M'Pherson if he chose to allow them to do so. But," he continued, "this must be your last holiday. We have permitted you to be very idle this summer, but you must now begin to study hard again; and you must prove to us that you have not been spoiled by the amusements provided for you. Mamma and I will take advantage of your holiday to go to M—— for some new books, and we shall begin regular lessons and reading next week."

After breakfast the young ones all went to the orchard, where they found M'Pherson with two or three other men with large hampers and ladders, preparing to get down the fruit with which many of the trees were yet laden.

"We will climb the trees, Allen, and shake down the apples, and the girls can gather them up," said Douglas, eager to begin his new occupation.

"No, no, Douglas, that plan answered well enough with our small quantity of fruit, which was all consumed in a few days. But these are expected to keep for months, and we must be very careful not to bruise them. I am not sure that M'Pherson will allow us to do more than pick up those that are fallen, or with our long poles shake the branches that the men on the ladders cannot reach. M'Pherson, if we promise to be very careful, will you allow us to help in gathering the fruit off the trees?"

"If you are *very* careful, Master Allen, but not otherwise. The apples are so ripe that if you set to work hastily, you will probably knock down two or three for every one you pull. I will trust you with that branch," he continued, pointing to one easily got at, and which had few side branches. Douglas sprang forward, and was going to climb the tree and begin at once, but M'Pherson caught hold of him, saying,—

"Not you yet, Master Douglas, you do not know how to set about it."

"But I will climb the tree if I choose," said Douglas, very angrily, trying to break away from M'Pherson; "you have no right to prevent me, and you shall not hinder me."

"I have just this right, Master Douglas," answered M'Pherson, composedly, "that my master has given me the charge of this orchard, and no one shall injure his fruit while in my charge."

"You are excessively impertinent to think of keeping me from doing as I please. My uncle allowed me to gather the fruit, and I will do it in spite of you. Let me go, I say," he continued, struggling furiously, while M'Pherson held him firmly by the arm.

Allen tried to reason with him, but Douglas was too angry to listen to reason, and finding that he could not free himself from M'Pherson's strong grasp, he turned round and struck him with all his force. M'Pherson did not say a word; he dropped Douglas's arm and walked off in the direction of the house, telling one of the men quietly, that he must prevent any of the young gentlemen from climbing the trees while he was away.

"O Douglas!" exclaimed two or three of the children at once; "you ought not to have done that—M'Pherson has gone to tell papa."

"He may tell whom he pleases," was the haughty answer; "I do not care. What right had he to dictate to me?"

"Because this orchard is under his charge," answered Allen; "and it is his duty to prevent any one from injuring it. I am afraid papa will be very angry."

"Allow me to run after M'Pherson," cried Georgie, "and tell him you are sorry, and will do what he bids you."

"Tell M'Pherson that I am sorry — and say I will do as he bids me!" answered Douglas, with increased haughtiness. "I shall do nothing of the kind, I assure you."

The little Grahams saw that it did no good to speak to him, and they awaited M'Pherson's return in silence. Douglas turned away from them, and in doing so moved nearer the tree. One of the men stepped in front of it, saying, very respectfully but firmly, "You cannot climb this tree, sir."

"I have not the least desire to do so," answered Douglas, contemptuously; "if I had, *your* orders should have no effect on me."

The man made no answer; and in a few minutes the party saw M'Pherson returning alone.

"Oh, I hope that papa has gone to M——," exclaimed Allen, as he and Harry ran to meet him.

"We were afraid that you were going to tell papa," said Harry.

"I have sent to ask him to be so good as to come here," answered M'Pherson, in his usual quiet manner.

The boys walked beside him for some steps without speaking; at last Allen said, hesitatingly—

"Do you mean to tell papa that Douglas struck you? We should like you very much not to tell him. We know that he was wrong, but he will be sorry for it soon; and papa will be very angry."

"I should only tell for Master Douglas's own good. I am not at all angry with him. I should only tell because I thought it right to do so."

"We know that," replied Allen; "but if you could at all think it right not to tell, it would make us all much happier. I am sure it will do Douglas as much good if you punish me instead of him. I will not gather apples all day; and when Douglas gets out of his passion and finds that he has deprived me of that pleasure, it will do him as much good as if papa punishes him."

"You are a very kind boy," replied M'Pherson. "But I did not intend to tell my master about the blow. I am quite sure that Douglas is sufficiently punished for it already; his pride will be so much hurt by his doing such an undignified thing. The

reason why I quitted my hold of him as soon as he struck me, and not before, was, because I knew very well that the regret he would feel for having done it, would sober him, and that I might leave him without any fear of his doing mischief. But there is my master," he continued, pointing to Mr Graham, whom they could see crossing the part of the park that lay between the garden and orchard. M'Pherson walked leisurely towards the spot where Douglas was standing leaning against the tree. He looked very sullen, but M'Pherson could see, from the way in which he avoided looking at him, that he was ashamed of having struck him. Mr Graham advanced rapidly; he had felt a little afraid that some accident had happened when he got M'Pherson's message.

"Did you wish to speak to me, M'Pherson?" he asked, after a hasty glance had assured him that all were safe.

"Yes, sir," replied M'Pherson; "I took the liberty of asking you to come here in order to tell Master Douglas that it is your will that none of the young gentlemen should climb the trees or meddle with the fruit without my permission."

"Certainly that is my will," answered Mr Graham, observing for the first time Douglas's sullen demeanour. "You ought to have understood that from my saying

so expressly that you might assist M'Pherson if *he* pleased."

Douglas did not speak, and Mr Graham continued, "Do you understand this now? If you wish to help at all, you must do so entirely under M'Pherson's directions, and I desire that you will not do anything but what he permits you to do."

"I will do nothing at all, then," said Douglas, very angrily; "for I will certainly never submit to be under the orders of an impertinent, interfering fool like M'Pherson."

"M'Pherson is neither impertinent nor interfering," replied Mr Graham. "You can do as you please about assisting in gathering the fruit or not. Only remember, that it is my positive command to you, not to gather a single apple until you have apologised to M'Pherson for using such language to him, and have also promised to follow his directions implicitly. Do not say anything more about it, Douglas," he added, seeing that Douglas was about to speak. "You are not in a mood to speak properly, and I cannot suffer you to speak disrespectfully to me. It is enough that you understand what I desire you to do."

Mr Graham then turned to speak to the other children, leaving Douglas very unhappy and indignant. He was angry with Mr Graham for speaking to him

in such a commanding manner before the work-people, and he felt inclined to answer him as haughtily as he had spoken to M'Pherson, but his uncle's calm decided tone and authoritative manner overawed him, and he remained silent.

After Mr Graham went away, M'Pherson told Allen that he might try the branch he had pointed out, cautioning him to avoid, as much as possible, pulling the side branches towards him, as that was apt to shake off the apples. He watched him for a few minutes, and then, being satisfied with his careful manner of proceeding, he left him to set Harry to work. Georgie was always so prudent and steady that he promoted him too, to the honourable task of climbing the trees. The girls and Lewis had ample employment, going about among the trees, receiving the apples as they were pulled, and carrying them to the hampers, and picking up what the gatherers allowed to fall, or what had been shaken down by the wind.

All were soon busy. Douglas, the only idle and discontented person, remained standing leaning against the tree, just as his uncle had left him. Every angry and proud feeling of his heart was busy within him, as he stood there gazing upon the merry group; exciting himself to greater indignation, by dwelling upon and exaggerating all the injuries he had received; and

looking upon himself as a sort of victim whom every one was leagued against. Mr Graham was harsh and unjust, M'Pherson impertinent, and his cousins and Alice were very unkind to enjoy themselves so much while he was unhappy; they ought not, he thought, to be so friendly with M'Pherson, when he had behaved so ill to him. He tried to despise their amusement too, and to persuade himself that he had no wish to join them, and that it was a stupid way of spending a holiday. But in this attempt he did not succeed; for there is always something very captivating to young people in a busy, bustling scene like that before him; and in spite of his endeavours to repress it, he could not help wishing to take part in it. Once the thought came into his mind, whether it would not be a good plan to make the requisite apology, and so be able to enjoy himself. But he rejected this thought with disdain; and in order to put himself out of the way of being tempted to such a humiliating act, he walked out of the orchard altogether.

The other children, in the meantime, pursued their occupations very cheerily, until twelve o'clock, when M'Pherson advised them to rest for a little while. It was a warmer day than we generally have in October, —the white fleecy clouds, which M'Pherson said betokened wind, being too light to have much effect in

softening the brightness or heat of the sun. Allen and Georgie went to the house to get bread and milk for luncheon, and they found seats from which they could see the men still hard at work.

"Where is Douglas?" asked Harry.

One of the girls answered that she had seen him go away in the direction of their gardens about an hour before.

"I wish very much that he had not been so angry," said Allen. "We ought to have told him that M'Pherson always takes charge in this business, and that we are all under his orders."

"I think it was a pity that M'Pherson spoke so dictatorially to him at first," remarked Eleanor. "It is provoking to be stopped in such a cool way, when you are eager to begin work."

"Yes," replied Harry; "and then Douglas got angry, because he thought that M'Pherson had no right to dictate to him."

"M'Pherson told me," answered Allen, "that he was sorry that he had not spoken more pleasantly; but he spoke hastily because Douglas was in such a hurry to begin, that he would not wait to hear what he was to do."

"Well, we cannot help it now," said Marion; "but I wish very much that we could get Douglas into good-

humour again. I think one of us girls might go after him, and try to persuade him to do as papa desired him."

Marion looked at Alice as she spoke; and Alice herself felt conscious that she was the proper person to go. But she was afraid that Douglas might be angry with her too: she did not know what to say to him, or how to persuade him. In short, dearly as she loved her brother, and earnestly as she wished to see him among them again, she could not resolve to make the exertion that was necessary to overcome her timidity, and her dislike to any disagreeable task. As she did not speak, therefore, Eleanor, after a moment's thought, said that she would go; and rising immediately, she went out of the orchard towards their garden.

"That is so like Eleanor," exclaimed Allen; "she is always so ready to do anything. You and Alice, Marion, say so and so ought to be done, but Eleanor is almost always the one to do it."

Marion answered a little angrily, that she could sometimes act as well as Eleanor.

"Oh yes," replied Allen, "you *can;* but what I mean is, when a disagreeable task is proposed, you and Alice only think of how to excuse yourselves from it, while Eleanor, seeing that some one must perform it, sets about it at once."

Marion was going to defend herself still more angrily, but was prevented by a frank confession from Alice that, in her own case at least, Allen's accusation was correct.

"I am often sorry afterwards," she added; "but at the time the task seems so difficult, that I cannot make up my mind to do it."

"That brings us back," remarked Harry, "to what mamma so often says of both you and me; that we think too much of the difficulty of performing our duty, and not enough of the simple right or wrong."

Eleanor, in the meantime, had gone down the river towards their garden. She crossed by the stone bridge which was always called Maggie's Bridge, went up the bank, and entered by the upper gate. From the middle of the highest walk she could see every part of their own garden, and a good part of the lawn on the other side; but Douglas was not in sight. She saw, however, that the little gate at the bottom of the garden was open, and this made her feel pretty sure that Douglas had been there; for she remembered distinctly that she and Alice had turned back in the morning to shut this gate, as they were afraid of the dogs getting in. She supposed that Douglas had come in by this little gate, and had gone out at the top of the garden, so that she would most probably find him in one of the walks

up the hill. But as she went down the middle walk to shut the gate, a slight circumstance made her change her opinion. The ground on each side of this walk was laid out in vegetables, with broad flower-borders next the walk, and in order to separate the flowers from the vegetables, the children had, two summers before, made a light paling round the vegetables, and trained creeping roses and honeysuckles upon it. This made a very pretty screen in summer when the flowers were in beauty, and the vacant spaces over which the roses had not yet spread, the children covered with sweet peas and Indian cresses. The young gardeners were very proud of this fence, and took great delight in training and cutting their roses, and keeping it always in good order. But on this morning, Eleanor and Alice had found that one long truant branch of an Ayrshire rose-tree had got loosened from its support, and was lying across the gravel-walk. It was this that made Eleanor so careful to shut the gate, for they had not time to fasten it up; and there was a beautiful bunch of roses (late as it was) on the branch, which they were anxious to preserve from their friend Mussie's destructive paws. Now Eleanor found her bunch of roses trampled into the gravel, and part of the branch broken off. As she stooped sorrowfully to lift it up, she guessed that Douglas, in his angry haste,

not seeing the branch, it had caught his foot as he walked over it, and that he had broken it in his impatience at being checked. She saw that he had stepped into the border to free himself from it; and looking at his foot-print, she saw that he had gone *down*, not *up*, the garden. He must have gone down the walk by the river-side, and she tried to console herself for the destruction of her roses by the reflection that, if it had not been for them, she might have wandered up the hill all the afternoon without finding him.

Soon after leaving the gate of their garden, she saw Mussie in one of the wood-walks above her, hunting for rabbits. She knew that he had left the orchard with Douglas, and she immediately began to climb the bank in hopes of at last succeeding in her search. Nor was she disappointed. A little farther along the walk she saw Douglas lying beside the trunk of a fallen tree. He took no notice of her as she came up; but after she had seated herself on the tree, he asked her sullenly what she wanted.

"I want you to come back with me to the orchard Douglas; we miss you very much."

"I will not," replied Douglas in a sulky tone; "you can just go back again, if that is all you want."

"I will not go back," said Eleanor. "If you will not go with me, I will stay with you."

"I do not want you," he replied; "and as you have managed to be happy so long without me, you can go back and forget me again."

Eleanor looked at him for a moment, and then said with a half smile, "O Douglas, are you angry because we went on gathering the apples without you? We did not forget you, only we did not like to try to persuade you then, because you were so angry."

"I had a good right to be angry," said Douglas, haughtily; "and I am angry still. So you may go back, for you will not be able to persuade me now, any more than you could have done then."

Poor Eleanor saw that she had not taken the right means of soothing Douglas; and she was considering what she ought to say or do next, when an angry bark from Mussie, and the sound of a man's footsteps, interrupted her meditations.

"Frank Herbert!" she exclaimed, eagerly starting up as he appeared.

Douglas also rose; while Mussie used every means in his power to show that he had not forgotten him, although Frank had been away from home ever since he was found.

"How did you come here? where did you come from? We thought you were not to be back until the end of the month," exclaimed Eleanor.

Frank, with a good-humoured smile, answered all her questions. He had returned sooner than he had expected, because he had some expectation of going soon to sea again. He had arrived at his father's house the night before, had been a long walk through the woods, and was now on his way to Karnford.

"But," he asked in turn, "why are you two here alone?"

Eleanor replied, with some confusion, that the others were in the orchard gathering apples.

"And do you not like that occupation too?" he asked, looking keenly at her and Douglas. "I remember I used to delight in it."

Neither answered.

"Come," said he, frankly, "I see there is something wrong here. I should like much to know what it is; but if you would rather not tell me, I will ask you no more questions."

Eleanor looked at Douglas. Douglas hesitated, and then said, half sullenly, "You may tell Frank if you like, Eleanor; I am not at all ashamed."

Frank strongly suspected that Douglas was deceiving himself, and that he did really feel ashamed, but he did not say so; he merely remarked, as he seated himself on the tree, that he would not be sorry to sit down, as he was rather tired.

"Now, let us have a fair trial," he continued, laughing. "I am the judge; you, Douglas, I suppose, the accused; and Eleanor, the accuser."

Eleanor gave a very fair account of the whole matter, neither blaming nor excusing Douglas too much. She said, candidly, that M'Pherson had spoken more hastily than he would have done if he had not been busy; and that Douglas did not know that it was always the rule in the apple-gatherings for all to obey M'Pherson. This moderate way of stating the matter did Douglas good, in so far as it removed from his mind all the exaggerated views he had been taking of the provocation he had received, and showed him his own foolish passion in a more inexcusable light.

"Now, Douglas," said Frank, jestingly, "we must hear your answer. Do you plead guilty to the charge?"

"I did strike M'Pherson, and call him impertinent and interfering, but he deserved it."

"Oh, but we are not trying M'Pherson's cause just now, but yours."

"But you cannot try my cause, as you call it, without knowing the provocation I received."

"I beg your pardon, Douglas. We have first to prove that the offence has been committed; secondly, the criminality of it in law; and then the provocation

received may be used as a plea for the mitigation of the sentence."

It was difficult to resist Frank's merry, good-humoured manner, and though a little indignant at the terms offence, criminality, and sentence, Douglas forced himself to take it as a joke.

"You plead guilty to the charge of having struck M'Pherson, and called him names, so that the first point requires no argument. As to the second, I think you will scarcely venture to assert that you have a right to strike a man, or call him names whenever you please. If you have no such right, it must be wrong to do so. Thus we have proved that you have committed a *crime;* the only point unsettled, is the extenuating circumstances connected with your offence. You plead that you were first offended against. Now, did you strike M'Pherson to prevent him from injuring you, or to punish him for having done so?"

Douglas hesitated for a moment. "Merely because I was angry," he said at last.

"That is to say, you did it to punish him. But the law does not allow any man to take the punishment of another into his own hands."

"What could I do?" asked Douglas.

"You ought to have had recourse to the law to obtain amends for the injury you supposed had been

done to you. You took an illegal way of obtaining amends, and therefore exposed yourself to punishment in turn."

Douglas was silent.

"You see," pursued Frank, laughing, "that you are fairly condemned. Your case is this: A man does what you consider an injury to you; in order to punish him you commit an assault upon him; an assault is an offence punishable by law; therefore you have incurred the penalty the law awards. Come, Douglas," continued Frank, more seriously, "I think you are convinced that, supposing M'Pherson did wrong, still you offended against him. Be a man then; do boldly and bravely what is right, however disagreeable it may be; go down at once to the orchard, walk up to M'Pherson and say, 'I was wrong; I will not do this again.' You imagine that you are asserting your dignity by refusing to acknowledge your fault, but you are quite mistaken. You are only acting the part of a petted child. Your reason is convinced that you have done wrong, and to rest a moment without acknowledging it, only proves that you have a want of honesty, or a want of courageous resolution in your character, perhaps both. You are unwilling to go because you think M'Pherson will suppose that you apologise only because you can no longer bear the punishment of

being excluded from the amusement you wish to enjoy. Let him think so; you have nothing to do with his thoughts. All your concern ought to be to do what is just and right. You have injured him, and justice requires that you should make reparation at once."

"And I will," exclaimed Douglas, starting up; "come after me, if you please, and see."

Well pleased, Frank and Eleanor followed him, but Douglas went too fast for them. He ran hastily through the wood, across the river, and into the orchard: he walked straight up to M'Pherson and held out his hand.

"M'Pherson," he said, "I did wrong in striking you, and calling you names; I am sorry for it; will you forgive me?"

M'Pherson shook his hand heartily. He frankly acknowledged that he had been to blame in speaking to Douglas as he did. If he had not been thinking of other things, he said, he would not have caught hold of him in such a provoking way, but have told him quietly why he could not allow him to begin until he knew how to proceed. "But you may believe, Master Douglas, that I did not *intend* to make you angry."

"I ought to have believed that from the first. You are always kind and considerate to us, and you were very generous not to tell my uncle that I struck you."

"Oh, you were not yourself when you did that; I never thought of it again. But I hope you are going to help us now? We shall be much the better for your help."

Douglas was much touched by the way in which M'Pherson said this, by the care he took not to make it appear as if he were granting him permission to work, but rather asking him to do it as a favour. He felt more real sorrow than before for his foolish unreasonable passion, and saw more clearly the evil and childishness of his fits of anger and pride. He was particularly careful all afternoon to follow M'Pherson's directions very exactly, and was pronounced to be a cautious and prudent gatherer, it being proved that fewer apples fell from his branches than from any of the others.

After the young people were ready for dinner, they went out on the stairs at the front door to watch for the return of Mr and Mrs Graham. Douglas was anxious for them to come home, but yet when they saw the carriage coming up the avenue, he hung back while the rest pressed forward to welcome them. When, however, he saw his uncle looking through the group, as if anxious to know where he was, and what he had done, he went forward to him.

"M'Pherson and I are friends now, uncle," he said,

colouring very much; "and I am both sorry and much ashamed of having behaved so foolishly this morning."

"I am glad to hear it, Douglas," said his uncle, kindly; "but, my dear boy, I hope you are aware that your impatience and pride are not merely foolish, but positively sinful in God's sight. Do not forget this, for Satan's surest means of leading us into sin, are to persuade us to look upon our faults as mere follies, and to make us forget that *every* transgression of God's law, however small, is an act of rebellion against His sovereign authority, and therefore a grievous sin.

Douglas listened to Mr Graham with a humility and submission which gave his uncle the pleasing assurance that his heart was really softened, and his pride subdued. He gave him also, of his own accord, a full and fair statement of the whole transaction, and acknowledged that it was more the unexpected pleasure of seeing Frank that had at first subdued his sullenness, than any conviction that he was in the wrong. He told, also, how it was almost altogether pride that had made him resolve to ask M'Pherson's pardon, because Frank proved to him that it was mean and childish to be afraid to do so; and that it was not till M'Pherson had softened his heart by his kindness and generosity, that he felt real sorrow for his offence against him.

"I did feel sorrow before, uncle, but it was sor

row on my own account; I was vexed that I had put myself in the wrong, and shown myself so foolish."

"But did you not all the time feel conscious that you had done wrong?"

"Far in, in my heart, there was a little consciousness, but I always shut it up, and would not suffer it to come out, or to speak."

"Well, Douglas, I have great hopes that, with God's help, you will be able to overcome this fiery, proud temper, because I see that, when once the fit is over, you have courage to look back and expose all the lurking evil in your heart. One word of warning; after a storm like to-day's, there is something dangerous in the pleasant calm that follows. We are kind, because you have been unhappy, and because you have done right in the end; you are well pleased with yourself, because you have been victorious in a hard struggle with your evil passions; and the agreeable contrast all this presents to your unhappy state in the morning, makes you feel happier than you were before you did wrong. Now, there is a danger of your forgetting, in the enjoyment of this peace and happiness, that you have really sinned against God. Remember that you have done so, that your sin is recorded against you, and that no performance of what is only your duty can blot it out from that awful book of

God's remembrance; nothing can do it but the blood of Christ."

No more passed between them, but Douglas felt the truth of what his uncle had said, when he saw how kind every one was to him, and felt how soothing their kindness was.

When the children went into the drawing-room, after their lessons were finished, they found Mr and Mrs Graham looking over a large collection of books they had brought from M——.

"New music, mamma," cried Eleanor, as her quick eye caught sight of a roll of music.

"Yes, Eleanor, and I have done more than buy you new music to-day. I have engaged Mr B——, the music-master at M——, to come out twice a week to give lessons to you three girls."

Eleanor and Marion were delighted at this information, for they had both great talent for music; but Alice sighed as she remarked that when they had a master they would have to practise for a longer time than they now did; and she told her uncle that he must shorten their other lessons.

"On the contrary, Alice," replied Mr Graham, smiling, "I have determined to grant the request you all made some time ago, to begin to learn German, and I have brought out books for the purpose."

Alice sighed more deeply still.

"You may trust your uncle not to give you more than you can accomplish," said Mrs Graham.

"I know that, aunt, but still," —— she hesitated; "I do not like to have so much to do every day; it seems like a heavy load upon me, in the morning to awake and think how much must be done before night."

"Well, Alice," exclaimed Marion, "I think it is delightful to have a great deal to do, and to think that you must be active and diligent every hour of the day, in order to accomplish it all."

"I am afraid, Marion," said Mrs Graham, "that you sometimes stop short at the *thinking* about it."

Marion coloured, even to tears, as she said, quickly, "I do not like to hear you say that, mamma. Every one seems to think that I am always talking and never acting."

"I did not intend to vex you so much, my little Marion; but quick and active as you imagine yourself to be, Alice often accomplishes more than you do. You like, as you say, to *think* about being busy, but when the time for business comes, you are often idle and inattentive. I believe you are often thinking of the pleasure there is in being active, while you are sitting for an hour over a task you could learn in a

quarter of the time, if you gave your whole mind to it."

Marion did not reply, but her countenance showed that she was only half satisfied as to the correctness of this charge. Mrs Graham resolved to recur to it at another time, as this was a defect in Marion's character that seemed to be increasing.

"My dear Alice," said Mr Graham, "I should be very sorry to lay such a heavy load upon you as you describe; but I think if you begin steadily, every morning, to lift the first stone of your burden, you will find that you can easily accomplish the raising of them all before night. If you cannot do so, you may depend upon it I shall not ask you to pursue the German. It is of no consequence *when* you learn it, it is of little consequence whether you ever learn it at all; but it is of the greatest consequence that you should acquire activity of mind, and overcome your indolence."

"I should like to learn it, uncle, only I am afraid it will be very difficult."

"Do you know, Alice," said her uncle, as he put his arm round her, and drew her towards him; "I am sometimes afraid that I shall lose my temper and patience with you, if you do not exert yourself a little more."

Alice looked smilingly up in his face as she replied, "I am not at all afraid, uncle; you never lose your temper."

"Oh, but *I* am much afraid, Alice. It provokes me to hear a young girl like you say you fear it will be very difficult. Why, young people ought to rejoice in meeting difficulties; and instead of shrinking from them, they should, like the knights of old, buckle on their armour, and spring forward to meet them with a cheerful heart and determined will. I intend you all to be very busy this winter, and I warn my three idle ones," nodding smilingly to Marion and Harry, "that I will not answer for my patience standing out, if they try it too much."

"Marion and Harry are idlers," said Mrs Graham; "but Alice is a sleeper, I think."

"Yes, they do not take any pains, except when they please; but Alice dislikes exertion of every kind. Marion and Harry would not sit still and dream, as she does. They are like the boy who wished to be a sunbeam, that he might have nothing to do all day but to dance up and down in the air, and dart out and into dark holes and corners."

"O papa, tell us about him."

"It is a long story, Eleanor, and I am not sure *that* I remember it."

"Oh yes, papa, you will remember it; and the longer the better, you know."

"Get your work, then, girls; and if you will bring me the pretty little drawing you made of the mill last week, Eleanor, I will mount it for you, that you may give it to your uncle," said Mrs Graham.

The boys were busy with some nets which were intended to be ready before next summer for their small cherry-tree, and so all had some occupation, while Mr Graham told them the following story:—

Gerard was a quick, clever boy, but very idle. He was not lazy or indolent, like some little girls; for in his amusements, or in pursuits that pleased him, he spared no pains, and thought no exertion too great to attain his object. But, at his studies, or when obliged to do anything he disliked, he thought everything a trouble, grumbled over every little difficulty, and, in short, was in great danger, with all his cleverness and sense, of becoming a useless, idle, selfish being. One bright day, early in summer, when all the leaves were in their richest, freshest dress, this young idler wandered out alone into a field, and lay down to enjoy, in the perfect luxury of doing nothing, the beautiful sights and sounds around him. He lay for some time, thinking how disagreeable it was to have difficult lessons to learn, or to be forced to exert himself and make

himself of use to others. And as he watched the bright particles that appear to float up and down in the air on a warm day, he exclaimed, "Oh, how I should like to be a sunbeam, to have nothing to do but to dance up and down in the air, glide out and in to dark shady nooks, and float on the surface of cool waters." While thinking of this, lying comfortably on a soft bed of moss, his eyes gradually began to close, his thoughts became confused; he fell asleep. He slept and dreamed. He dreamed that as he lay there, a lovely fairy came flying towards him, and lighted on the turf beside him. She was clothed in a golden coloured robe, so dazzlingly bright that he could scarcely look at her. She stood beside him, and looked at him with a countenance that expressed both pity and contempt. "Foolish boy!" she said, "so you wish to be a sunbeam, in order that you may have nothing to do but to enjoy yourself; and you know not that there does not breathe on earth a more miserable wretch than he who has none to please or to serve, who lives for himself alone. But, come with me and learn if the sunbeams have nothing to do but to enjoy themselves." As she spoke she raised her light wings, and rose easily and gracefully into the air. Gerard found that he had wings too, and he followed her through the sky for many an hour, until the sun had gone to his rest and the stars shone

out. Still on flew the fairy through the dark night, and on flew Gerard after her, until they arrived at the Castle of the Sun, the great lord of the day.

The sun was not yet out of his bed, but there was a bustle and a movement among all the inhabitants of his castle, and all his servants; Gerard's friends, the sunbeams, seemed to be preparing for some great work.

"What nonsense, uncle," cried Douglas; "the sun does not go to bed, he only"——

"I know, my dear Douglas," said his uncle very quietly, "that the sun does not go to sleep, and I rather suspect that the author knew this also. But I suppose he did not think that the history of a dream required philosophical accuracy. And, indeed, I wonder that a gentleman of your remarkable penetration and knowledge did not as well object to sunbeams being represented as living and rational creatures."

Douglas blushed, and looked half offended.

"I beg your pardon, Douglas, for laughing at you, but I think it was a little superfluous to tell us that the sun does not go to bed, and that he disappears in one place only to shine in another. And I suspect you desired more to show us your own knowledge than to give us information, as you could not suppose we required it. But to continue my story,"—

Although the sun was not yet up, some of his servants had already gone forth on the business of the day—not clothed indeed in their dazzling golden attire, but in invisible robes, and their path only manifest by the faint but ever-increasing light which they shed around them as they proceeded on their way. But when the great lord of the day arose from his couch, then began the labours of his innumerable attendants.

Gerard felt that he had the power of accompanying any of the bright bands that he chose, and he was soon darting through the air with a company of busy dew-gatherers.

They alighted on a field of wheat, and began to occupy themselves in warming its tender shoots, chilled by the night-air, and in conveying up to their home in the sky the dew-drops that lay heavy on the young leaves. The dew-drops sparkled joyously as their friends the sunbeams stooped down to kiss them and to carry them away, for they knew that their task was done, and they were glad to return to the bright skies, to rest there until again sent down in dew or rain to fertilise and refresh the earth. Some of them were, however, lying fast asleep, deep down in the heart of the plants, and the sunbeams had to seek them out diligently and awaken them, knowing that to permit them to sleep there too long would injure the

tender flower, which had not yet ventured forth from the shelter of its guardian leaves.

"We are of use," cried these busy dew-gatherers to Gerard. "We are gay and happy, because we are fulfilling the task appointed for us, and are nursing into health and fruitfulness this plant, so necessary to man."

Some of the dew-gatherers, too, were busy in the garden, and Gerard observed how all things seemed to rejoice in their presence. The dark violet lifted its drooping head, and gave forth its sweetest odours when they touched it; the pretty primrose opened its leaves and looked up with joy in its glad eye at their approach; while the birds sung gaily on every bush and tree.

"We are of use," they too cried. "See how the sight of us fills all things with joy. We are gay and happy, because we are contributing to the happiness of others."

And now Gerard went to join some who were directing their flight to a wood. They had great difficulty in making their way through the thick foliage, but they persevered,—climbing over one leaf, darting under another, and taking advantage of every chance opening which the light breeze afforded them, until they shone brightly on the grass beneath. And oh!

how much beauty did they shed around them — on the velvet turf, on the rich brown moss, on the very green leaves which had tried to impede their progress! And Gerard saw innumerable tribes of insects stealing out of their nests, some to dance merrily with the sun beams, others to creep up and down the trunks of the trees; and he heard the busy, happy murmur that followed on their path wherever they went. And while he watched, he saw a young girl coming slowly through the wood. There was a shade of anxiety and sorrow upon her brow, and a weight of care upon her heart. Many vexations and troubles had conspired to depress her, and she had gone out that morning feeling as if nothing could help her, or remove her sadness. But now, as she sauntered along, she remarked half unconsciously the gay sunbeams that were busy around her. She saw them darting into shady nooks, and lighting all in them up into life and beauty; she saw the gray moss on the trees turn into silver at their touch. She saw the butterflies dance as if giddy with joy, because the sun shone upon them; and as she gazed she remembered the word, "If God so clothe the grass of the field, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" And she thought, "If God forgets not to send His sun to warm, refresh, and beautify all these things, how

can I fear that He shall forget me, or refuse to help me?" And her brow grew lighter, and she raised her heart to heaven, and prayed for faith to cast all her care upon Him who cared for her. As she passed on calm and peaceful, the sunbeams looked at Gerard and cried, "We are of use, and we are gay and happy, because we are fulfilling our appointed task, and are leading the hearts of the sorrowful to rest upon their God!"

Now, Gerard took a long flight across land and ocean. Much did he see by the way of the faithful sunbeam's work—more than I have time to tell. But when they were crossing a country where oppression and violence reigned, he glided, with one gentle, solitary ray, into a deep, dark dungeon, where was one who had been there for many, many years; detained by injustice and cruelty, because he was resolute to serve God as God's Spirit and Word taught him to do, and not after the dictates of man. The sunbeam glided in, shed for a moment a stream of golden light upon the dark, damp walls of his dungeon, and then fled away. But it had done its part ere it went. When first the captive saw it, it sent a thrill of anguish to his heart, as it reminded him of the bright sunshine he was never again to see, of the free fresh air he was never again to breathe, and pictured to his

memory all the happy days of the past, all the dear ones whom he was never again to behold. But this anguish was but for a moment—soon there returned that calm, peaceful waiting upon God; that patient submission to His will that had been his support and consolation through the long years of solitude and misery. And Gerard heard him say, "Yes, go gay sunbeam, this is no place for you. Return to the bright hill-side—return to shine on free waters, to rejoice the hearts of free men. You have told me your tale, and you may go. You told me of earthly joy and happiness that shall never again be mine; but you told me also of a home that is prepared for me where sorrow cannot come, and you have shed into my heart a ray of peace far brighter and more lasting than the light you cast on that dark wall!" The sunbeam looked at Gerard, and whispered, "I too am of use; my joy lies in fulfilling the work for which I am sent."

The next band led him to a rocky sea-shore, and oh! how gaily and beautifully did they sport with the waves, as they rolled in upon the sand, or dashed against the rocks. Now lighting up their white heads, and making them brighter than the eye could well bear to look at, now catching the light spray, and turning it into sparkling diamonds and pearls, and now

creating a thousand fairy rainbows, which shone for a moment, and died away only to shine again. Gerard was wiser now, and he knew that even in conferring beauty upon inanimate things, the sunbeams were fulfilling their appointed task; but he did not know until they pointed it out to him, all the good they were doing here. For on that rocky beach there stood a gay party, who had come to see the beautiful mixture of rock and ocean. Their eyes sparkled with pleasure as they beheld the brightness and splendour of the sunshine on the water; and many were their light-hearted joyous exclamations of delight. But there was one among them whose heart swelled, as she marked the glorious sight with feelings too deep for utterance. She was one whom God's Spirit had shone upon, and led to seek a Saviour, the Sun of righteousness. And as she saw the bright colours that the waves gave back to the sun, she felt that they reproached her for remissness, in rendering back to her Saviour the light with which He had blessed her. And she resolved, in that Saviour's strength, to shine before men as these waves did; and by patience, meekness, gentleness, and love, to repay her God for what He had done for her; to seek to refresh and comfort the hearts of those He loved; and to endeavour, by the beauty of her life and conversation, to

lead those, who as yet knew Him not, to seek after Him.

"We too are of use," cried the sunbeams; "and are happy, far happier than an idle, selfish being like you can understand, in thus fulfilling our duty, and helping to stir up God's own people to serve Him better."

The sun was by this time getting low in the heavens, and it was with a softer light and a gentler step that the sunbeams moved on their various errands. One small party went with Gerard to the window of a chamber, in which lay a young boy in a deep sleep. His body was wasted with fever, his strength was gone, and all day he had tossed about in his bed, unable to sleep from pain and weariness. At length he slept, deeply, quietly; and his poor mother, as she watched him, blessed the God who had, in His kind, tender care, sent such a sweet sleep, which she fancied would be the precursor of renewed health and strength. But while he slept, a sunbeam stole softly into the darkened room, and shone full on the face of the sleeper. The mother rose hastily to shut it out, but the boy awoke. He looked up and smiled. "Do not shut out the sun, mother," he said, in a quiet, calm voice. "It has done a great service to you and to me. It *has* awakened me out of a sleep so deep, that had I not

wakened now, I never had wakened on earth again. And I would not willingly leave thee, my own, my tender mother, without telling thee how bright and beautiful that home is to which I am going. There is no sun there, for the Lamb is the light thereof; and oh! joy beyond all telling, not only shall I see that Lamb who died for me, but I shall at last be able to love Him. Often has my heart danced with joy in the brightness and warmth of the sun; and when I am gone, mother dear, you must look at its rays with joy and thankfulness, and remember that I am where its light is as darkness in comparison of the glory that is around the throne. Good-bye, mother darling, the sun and I are going to rest together." And as he spoke his eyes closed, his breath grew short, and, without a struggle, his spirit went home, and his weary pained body entered into rest. And the mother's heart was enabled to rejoice that so peacefully and sweetly her darling had left her.

Gerard awoke with the tear of pity in his eye, and he arose and went home a wiser, a more unselfish boy, for the words of the sunbeams rung in his ears—"We are gay and happy, because we are fulfilling the task given us to do, and are working good for others." He felt that though he was but a young, weak child, yet he had a task given him to perform; that there were means

of doing good in his power. He remembered, that if he could do nothing else, he could at least cheer the hearts of his parents by diligent, faithful attention to his studies, by prompt cheerful obedience to their commands, and by anxious efforts to save them trouble. Nor did the good effect of his dream ever pass away. In spite of his good resolutions, Gerard often found himself relapsing into his old habits of idleness; but a glance at the sunbeams, on their various errands to fertilise and beautify the earth, was, in general, sufficient to excite him to renewed exertions.

"And now, ladies and gentlemen, I think I deserve great credit for remembering so well a story that I have not read for, I am sure, fifteen years."

"I like it very much, papa," said Harry. "I like that kind of story, one remembers it so well. Do not you like it, mamma?"

"Yes, Harry, I think it is a good little fable, and it teaches us a good many lessons in a very pleasant way."

"I like the description of the sunbeams searching out and awakening the sleepy dew-drops in the heart of the young plants," said Alice; "and about them peeping in behind the gray moss to rouse the merry insects out of their nests."

"But I wish, papa," said Eleanor, "that the story

had told us more about the different people, how the rainbow girl got on, and how the mother recovered after the loss of her boy. I wanted to know if she had any more children, and if her husband were alive."

"Oh, you are very unreasonable, Eleanor," replied Mr Graham, laughing. "It was not at all the intention of the author to give us a history of these people. He leaves that to the imagination of the reader."

"But I do not like to have it left to my imagination. I should like to hear all about it."

"You may, if you please, enact the rainbow girl, as you call her, Eleanor," said Mrs Graham. "Form her resolution, and see how you succeed in keeping it."

"Do not you think, mamma," asked Marion, "that Miss Grey is a good deal like her?"

"I think Eleanor is like her already," said Douglas, "she is so cheerful and kind."

Mrs Graham glanced smilingly at Eleanor, and Eleanor blushed as she said—

"I know what you mean, mamma. I have not forgotten what you said to me about its being wrong to allow myself to laugh at people and turn them into ridicule. You mean that I must watch against this if I wish to be like the rainbow girl."

"Yes, Eleanor, I intended to remind you that this bad habit, if not checked, will greatly impair that use-

fulness that God has intended you for, in giving you the natural gaiety and kindliness which Douglas admires so much."

"And you told us pretty plainly, papa, what part of the lesson you meant for Harry and me," said Marion, smiling.

"That is the principal lesson of the story," replied Mr Graham. "But another one which comes out more indirectly is, to teach us to see God's hand and His kindness in those lesser beauties of nature. In the bright gilding of a cloud, in the sparkle of sunshine on the waters, or in a dew-drop on a blade of grass. We ought to observe these things, and to feel grateful for them; and besides its being our duty to do so, it is true wisdom. The man who has learned to mark and enjoy such things as these has objects of pleasure and admiration by his side every day and hour."



CHAPTER XVII.

SNOW.

"HOW cold, how very cold it is," exclaimed Eleanor, one day towards the end of October, as they were setting out on a long walk. "Who will try a race with me to warm my feet?"

Georgie accepted her challenge, and they started off on a merry race across the lawn in the direction of the stable-yard. When the others overtook them, they found them arguing with M'Pherson about the probability of there being a snow-storm. M'Pherson thought that it was too early in the year for a regular storm, and also that the clouds had gathered too quickly. They might have a shower, he said, but that would be all. He was wrong. The next day Alice was aroused by one of the boys coming into her room very early in the morning, bidding her rise

immediately and come out, for that there had been a very heavy fall of snow during the night, and they were going to have *such* fun making a snow-man, and pelting one another with snow-balls.

Before she was dressed, Eleanor and Marion came for her in the greatest glee. Everything was exactly as they would have wished. It was a Saturday; the snow had fallen so softly that the trees were in their greatest beauty with their snow covering; and it was a fine, bright frosty morning. Alice, who had never seen snow before, except in London, was quite enchanted with the beauty of the lawn in its winter dress, and the animated description the girls gave of the pleasures of a snow-storm, made her as eager as they were to get ready to go out. She would not allow them to wait for her, but promised to join them at the stable-yard as soon as she had finished her morning reading.

Now Alice had no idea of the condition of untrodden snow. The girls had spoken of the intense frost, and she had imagined that the snow would be quite hard and compact, and that she would be able to walk on it with great comfort in her usual walking shoes. She went out by the back-door, and found the court well trodden, and the snow there as hard as she could desire; but when she had passed through

the gate and proceeded down the back avenue, she soon found out her mistake,—her feet sunk over the shoes in the snow, and were quite wet before she had gone five steps. Poor Alice thought that if this was the comfort of snow in the country, she would much rather be without it altogether; and she felt much inclined to return home. A merry peel of laughter from the stable-yard reaching her ear, however, made her resolve to persevere, in the vain hope that she would get accustomed to the discomfort of the cold wet snow. She tried to place her feet in the foot-marks that she saw along the path, but the snow was so light, that some was always brushed off, and emptied into her shoe; and after going a few steps she again paused. Looking tówards the yard, she saw Mrs White, the housekeeper, come out of the yard, and come along the path to the house. Alice waited for her, and as she came nearer, she saw that she, too, appeared to think a snow-storm a very amusing thing, for there was a broad smile on her good-humoured countenance.

"Are you going up the yard, Miss Alice?" she asked. "You will find a merry party there. It makes me feel like a bairn myself to see their mirth and fun."

"I should like very much to go, but the soft wet snow makes me so uncomfortable."

Mrs White glanced at Alice's shoes. "No wonder, my dear, that your feet are wet with such shoes on. You ought to have strong waterproof boots like our young ladies."

"Must I wait till they are made before I can go out in the snow?" asked Alice, in a melancholy tone.

"Oh no," answered the good-natured housekeeper. "Come back with me and I will contrive some plan for keeping your feet dry."

She led her into her own room, where a cheerful, warm fire was burning, and made her take off her shoes and stockings, and rub her feet dry with a warm towel. She then went up-stairs, and returned in a few minutes with dry stockings, and a pair of strong boots belonging to one of the boys. The boots were much too large for Alice, so Mrs White advised her to put on a pair of Harry's worsted socks above her own stockings, to fill up the boots and keep her feet warm. She then pinned up her frock for her, and put on an old waterproof cape of Mr Graham's, which reached nearly to her feet.

"Thank you, thank you," cried Alice, laughing heartily at her own appearance. "You have managed very nicely,—my feet are quite warm."

She now ran quickly and fearlessly through the snow

and joined the others in the stable-yard. She found a great bustle there. The snow had come so unexpectedly, that no one was prepared for it; and there was a great deal to do in the cattle-shed, in the byre, and in the stables. The boys had left their snow-man to give what help they could in carrying messages, or in assisting in the hasty carpenter work that was required to make all things ready. The children enjoyed the excitement and bustle, and were much amused at the numerous difficulties and dilemmas they heard of. Alice thought that the varied demands that were made upon her uncle's attention were a good trial of his patience and calmness of temper. When he and M'Pherson were busy in consultation about some important point, one of the men would come with a grave face,—

"There are not more turnips in the house than will serve the cattle to-day, sir."

Again, "If you please, the horses' shoes must be frosted;" or, "The door of the house for the young horses is broken, sir."

But Mr Graham continued to answer in the same quiet undisturbed tone; and even the melancholy question, "What are we to do for coals, sir?—there are almost none in the cellar, and we cannot go for more through this deep snow;" could not annoy him. He

pointed quietly to the wood-stack, and turned again to his consultation with M'Pherson.

"O M'Pherson," said Eleanor, with a wise shake of her head, "you should have believed me yesterday, when I told you that it was going to snow. If you had, you would have been spared all this trouble."

"Really, Eleanor," said her papa, laughing, "you are too provoking. When we have so much to think of and to try our tempers, you ought not to triumph over us."

"The boys are worse than I am, papa. They made Thomas so angry this morning, by their delight at the bustle and turmoil every one is in."

"Thomas has less right to complain than any one else," remarked Marion. "For, though some of his pet plants are still out in the open border, yet this deep snow will keep them so warm and comfortable, that they will not feel the frost. They do not often get such a thick blanket so early in the year."

"Poor Thomas! he is more easily annoyed than most people," replied Mr Graham. "So remember, all of you, that I positively forbid you to tease him in any way, either with snow-balls, or by laughing at him."

"We may tease M'Pherson as much as we like, then, papa," cried Allen. "He never gets angry."

"If I were M'Pherson, I would get angry directly,"

replied Mr Graham, laughing, "if that is all the thanks you give him for his patience."

The children were in general fond of their Saturday's lessons, as they consisted merely of a drawing lesson, and of a sort of lecture upon Natural Philosophy from Mr Graham. But upon this charming snowy day, they were delighted to hear him say that he should not be able to attend to them; and the whole party, except Mrs Graham and Gracie, went out again immediately after breakfast.

The snow-man was discarded for a new project. They determined to build a house large enough to hold them all. Their plan was to raise a high mound of snow, and then dig a cave out of it. And they set all busily to work, shovelling up the snow, treading it down, and carrying pitchers of water to throw over it. The water froze, and so made the mound very hard. They erected it in a shady corner against the north side of a wall, so that it never was completely thawed through all the winter. They did not get it raised high enough during this storm; but it was a very severe winter, the snow being seldom off the ground; and by adding to it at every opportunity, they had a very large and compact mound before the Christmas holidays, when they had plenty of leisure to excavate their house, and fit it up with seats according to their taste. It

lasted until far on in spring, long after they had ceased to care about it; though for some time it was a great amusement to them.

When they had tired themselves with hard work at the mound, the girls went into the house to rest, while the boys obtained permission to go to the smith's shop to see the bustle there, caused by the numbers of horses going to get their shoes frosted. Every one they met on the road seemed full of business, and the boys again agreed that an unexpected snow-storm was a most amusing thing.

After the snow passed away, they found that a good deal of damage had been done among the young trees in their garden. Those that had still leaves on were so heavily loaded with snow that many branches were broken. And their favourite young purple beech, in particular, was broken over about half-way up the stem. But these disasters were quite unsuspected by them in the meantime; and they enjoyed fully all the fun and frolic of snow-balling one another, and a beautiful walk up to Sunset Cottage to see the icicles at their waterfall. They were certainly very splendid; and Alice and Douglas, to whom everything was quite new, were never tired of admiring the snow-laden trees and shrubs, the bright frozen snow sparkling in the sun, and the

waterfall decorated with icicles such as they had never dreamed of.

The day did not end in perfect harmony, however. The girls were very tired when they returned home from their walk. The boys, much stronger, and more capable of enduring fatigue, were still in high spirits, and persisted in snow-balling the weary girls, until even Eleanor's good temper gave way, under the irritation and discomfort of the snow getting down the back of her neck—a misfortune to which girls' dresses render them more subject than boys. The boys at last desisted, but not before they had made the girls angry, and even then they did it with a bad grace, declaring unreasonably enough, that they were cross and petted, and had no fun in them.

"I see," said Mr Graham, with a significant smile, as he glanced round the table after dinner; "I see that however delightful a bustle may be in the morning, its effects are not always so pleasant in the after part of the day."

"We were tired, papa," said Eleanor, colouring, "and did not like the boys to throw snow-balls at us."

"And the boys were angry, I suppose, because you were tired. Well, do not you think it is a pity that

you cannot have a little more consideration for one another?"

"But, papa," said Harry, "we were not angry because the girls were tired, but because they were so very cross and petted."

"Indeed, Harry, we were not petted," was Marion's angry rejoinder; "but you were"——

"Hush, hush," interrupted Mr Graham. "To quarrel about it now will only make the matter worse. If the girls were really petted, so much the more reason why the boys ought to have been sorry for them, and forborne to tease them; for it is much more uncomfortable to feel petted than to be merely tired. On the other hand, perhaps the girls did not fight hard enough against the cross feelings that weariedness is very apt to produce. But now that it is all over, the best plan for each little boy and girl is to forget that there is such a person in the world as himself or herself; and to use every effort to soothe and cheer all the others. And in order to help us in this, I am sure that Eleanor and Marion will sing that cheerful duet that we all like so much. I have not heard it for a week, and Mr B—— told me that Eleanor had been very successful in overcoming the difficulties of her part."

The girls complied immediately with this request,

and Mr Graham's pleasant, cheerful way of speaking had its usual effect in restoring peace and harmony to the little circle.

As I have already told you, it was not until after the first thaw that the children knew how much injury the snow had done to their young trees and shrubs. But on the next Monday afternoon, Mr Graham discovered that the roof of their little tool-house was crushed in by the weight of snow. He went to tell them of it, and found them all in the workshop with Frank Herbert, who was assisting them to construct a sleigh. The interest of this new occupation prevented them from being so much annoyed by the accident as they might otherwise have been. The boys declared that they were surprised that "the frail, ill-built thing" had lasted so long, and rather rejoiced at the thought of building a new one, forming magnificent plans for its erection. Eleanor alone expressed sorrow for its destruction.

"Poor old thing!" she said; "I shall be quite sorry to take it down. We thought it so neat, and were so proud of it when we got it finished. Papa and mamma came out to see it, and we made quite a grand ceremony on carrying the tools into it. We walked in procession, each bearing some tool; and I remember so well, little Gracie insisted on having some-

thing to carry, and nurse had great trouble in keeping her back. She could not understand why we walked so gravely; she wished to run as fast as she could."

"Oh yes, I remember that," cried Harry; "and we hung garlands of flowers all round the walls. How absurd it seems now to make such a work about such a ricketty old thing."

"It was not old then, though, Harry," replied Eleanor, laughing; "and it was the best we could make, so we thought a great deal of it. But we must go to Thomas, and beg a corner of his toolshed for our poor houseless spades and rakes. Come, Marion, and Alice, we will go now, and not stay to hear these ungrateful boys abuse our old friend."

Thomas was not at all willing to grant their request. Eleanor was his favourite, because she never teased him, and she was always ready to sympathise with him in any disasters that befell his plants. But even to her he made so many conditions about keeping the tools in good order, &c., that the children thankfully accepted the coachman's offer to give them a corner of the coach-house.

Thomas had more foresight than the children, as to the mischief likely to ensue from such a heavy fall of snow, while the leaves were still on the trees; and his gloomy forebodings on this subject made him less

able than ever to stand any trial of his temper. The young people did not believe his predictions, but said he was always grumbling about something. And when they discovered that he had been right, Harry declared that he was more annoyed at the thought of how much Thomas would triumph over them in the future, than vexed even at the destruction of their trees. "Whenever we contradict him," he said, "he will say, 'Well, well, we 'll see. Who was right about the snow upon the trees?'"

On various accounts, besides the discovery of the loss they had sustained, the thaw was not very agreeable to the children. It was delightful to take long walks while the snow was hard and dry, and everything dazzlingly bright and beautiful in its white dress. They all enjoyed their slides and snow-balling; their games with Mussie, and their skating with Frank Herbert and Mr Graham; and as long as the frost lasted, they all thought that snow was a charming thing. But the thaw changed matters considerably. The roads were so wet for some days, that Mrs Graham would not allow Alice to walk anywhere, except in one sunny walk, from which the boys had cleared away the snow before the thaw began. Her own hardy girls, she said, might walk with the boys if they chose; but she could not allow Alice to do so. At first,

Marion as well as Eleanor remained with Alice; but her patience soon failed, and she left them to their quiet walk alone. Her absence was, however, rather a relief to them; for, although she could resolve to make the great sacrifice of giving up her walk, she could not make the effort necessary to overcome her feelings of pettishness and impatience at being deprived of the pleasure. She went with them firmly resolved not to be satisfied with anything; and she felt angry with them because they were contented and cheerful. She felt and spoke as if she were the only injured person, and made Alice regret doubly her aunt's prohibition, because Marion seemed so much vexed by it. When they were left alone, Eleanor and Alice were much happier. They moralised very sagely upon Marion's disposition to fret about trifles, and agreed that they were happier without her. But Mrs Graham reminded them that Marion's temper was a greater trial to herself than it was to them; and advised them rather to find out ways to help her in overcoming it, than to discuss her faults in her absence.

The frost, when it came back, was joyfully welcomed by all the children, but particularly by the two prisoners, Alice and Eleanor. No thaw after the first tried their patience so much; for the boys always exerted themselves to clear a great variety of walks for

Mrs Graham and Alice. One thing that pleased Alice very much was, Harry's consideration in clearing the walk down to the river, so that she was able to enjoy the sight of their old friend the Karn, when swollen by the melted snow from the hills.



CHAPTER XVIII.

SPRING.

IF our young friends had had as much leisure for play and amusement as they had during summer, I am not sure that they would not have tired of this long winter. As it was, they had not much time to grow weary. They were very busy all the forenoon. In the afternoon they took long walks, worked at their snow mound, or had skating matches in fine weather; and when they could not get out, they had riotous games in the house, or found occupation in their workshop, making different articles of furniture for Sunset Cottage; and the preparation of lessons for the next day always took up the greater part of the evening. It was a very severe winter, so that Mrs Graham and the girls were well occupied in making warm clothing for their poor neighbours; and while they worked, one of the boys or Mr Graham read aloud to them.

One or two holidays were spent at Miss Buchanan's. The absence of the little Lindseys was often mourned over on these occasions; but they were a large party even without them, and had many a merry game of hide-and-seek in the uninhabited rooms. But, although they did not grow weary of the long winter, still the return of spring was a great delight to them all, and particularly to Alice and Douglas. The watching for, and recording the first symptoms of its approach,—the long walks to the dell for early violets; to the bank where primroses first made their appearance, or to the birch wood to catch the first sweet smell of the young leaves,—the bringing home the first buds of the hawthorn, and eager telling of the first song of the thrush or blackbird,—the anxiety about the spring frosts for the fruit-blossoms, and the constant daily examination of these blossoms, to ascertain what promise they gave of fruit;—all this was quite new to the town children, and Eleanor declared that she wished they could have London cousins every spring to show all these things to.

"However," she added, "I am not sure that many boys or girls would be such good admirers as you are. And it is a great comfort to get a really good admirer when you have anything to show."

"How can any one help admiring everything just

now?" asked Alice. "Everything looks so gay and pretty. The small larch-buds after the shower yesterday looked so joyous and laughing, the sight of them made me feel quite happy. And then the beech-bud you brought to me this morning! I never could have imagined anything so beautiful. The pale delicate green, covered with tiny spikes of pure silver. And I think that I admired it the more, because the dark brown hard beech-bud is much less promising than the buds of other trees."

"I think," remarked Douglas, "that if we are good sight-seers, you are the very best sight-showers I ever met with. You never forget to point out any beauty, however small."

"Mamma taught us that when we were very young," replied Marion. "I remember her showing me the different kinds of flowers on the mosses, long, long ago, when I was younger than Gracie, and inviting me to look closely into them and admire them."

"Well, I do love the mosses," cried Eleanor warmly; "they have such beautiful flowers; some of the cup kinds are so graceful and elegant."

"It is very amusing to hear you say that you *love* a flower, Eleanor," said Douglas, laughing. Eleanor laughed too. "It seems an absurd expression, and is, I suppose, an exaggerated one; but yet it is very diffi-

cult to find correct words in speaking about flowers or trees. That good old plane-tree, for instance, I feel quite grateful to it for becoming green so early, and it has such an honest friendly look, one can quite fancy that it comes out soon for the very purpose of giving us pleasure."

The children all laughed; but Allen said that he felt that too, and that there were some trees that seemed much kinder and more friendly to him than others. "The old elm," he said, "at the corner of the garden, is a fine noble-looking tree, but it has not the open happy look of that dear old plane. I can quite fancy Mr Elm to be a formal, grave, conscientious old gentleman, who always does his duty, but who cannot take a joke, and who thinks children a great plague."

"He must be a brother to old Thomas, then," said Harry, laughing; "for he cannot take a joke, and he thinks children a great plague."

"And has he not good reason to think so?" said Mrs Graham, who had overtaken them without their perceiving her. "Do you think, Harry, that if you were an old man, you would not think a little boy a great plague, when that little boy had hid your tools, laughed at you, and sought out every opportunity of tormenting you? My dear Harry, you really should

not do this. I found Thomas just now looking everywhere for a packet of peas, which he had left for a few minutes in the garden, and which at last were found hidden under a flower-pot. Did not you do this?"

Harry laughingly acknowledged that he was the culprit; but Mrs Graham looked grave. "Really, Harry, I cannot see any amusement in giving an old faithful servant like Thomas so much trouble. And I did not think that you could find pleasure in what gives pain to another. I have told Thomas that the next time you play him any trick, he must complain to your papa. You call these tricks jokes, but they are not jokes when they vex him so much, as you know they do, and you have no right to tease any person in that way. You have been told this before, Harry, and still you persist."

"Forgive me this time, mamma," said Harry, earnestly; "I am very sorry, indeed I am. Always when you and papa speak to me, I feel how wrong it is to tease Thomas, but I always forget."

"Because you think so little about it, Harry. You feel a little sorrow for a few minutes, and then you drive it out of your mind. If you were to be more anxious not to forget your faults, you would not be so often in disgrace."

"But you will not tell papa to-day, mamma," said Harry; "for I have grieved him enough already by my idleness and inattention. And indeed," he continued, in a sorrowful tone, "I despair of ever being any better. I do not know what to do. Papa says he cannot submit to my trifling any longer, and yet I am sure that there is no good in my trying any more to be less idle, for however firmly I resolve to-day, I shall be as bad as ever to-morrow. I may as well give up trying to improve altogether."

"No, dear Harry, you must not say that," replied Mrs Graham, earnestly and affectionately. "You do not know what bitter sorrow of heart it would give to papa and me, to see you give up the struggle with your evil temper and habits; to see that our dear boy was contented to remain idle, impatient, and careless, grieving those around him, and displeasing God. If you could at all conceive the bitter pain this would give us, you would never speak or think of desisting from your efforts to improve."

"I never could bear to give you pain, my own kind mamma," said the warm-hearted little fellow, much touched by his mother's earnest tone. "I shall struggle on, and not care for the pain or trouble it gives me. I see papa in the park, I will go to him at once and tell him that I am very sorry for having dis-

pleased him, and that I will begin now to fight harder than ever."

"Well," said Marion, looking after Harry, as he ran across the lawn, "I am sure that it would be a good thing for us all, if Harry's carelessness and my pettedness were to fly away suddenly, in a night; so that we might awake in the morning as attentive as Allen, as good-humoured as Eleanor."

"Wishes will never make either pettedness or carelessness fly away, my little Marion," said Mrs Graham, smiling, "but something else will. Earnest prayer to God, and a steady determined resistance to every beginning of the evil, will do far more than wishes. But it is easier to wish than to do this."

"Yes, it is very *easy* to wish, mamma," replied Marion, blushing.

"But not very useful, Marion, if you rest there. I do not doubt that you wish very sincerely to get rid of your pettedness, but you do not like the trouble and pain of resisting it. And you have yielded to it so much of late, that a very strong effort will be necessary now to overcome it."

"What has papa told Harry?" exclaimed Eleanor and Allen, as they saw him suddenly throw his cap up in the air, and then came running towards them, shouting "Hurrah! hurrah!"

"The Lindseys are come home—the Lindseys are come home—and we are to go there on Saturday," he cried as soon as he came within hearing.

The Grahams could scarcely believe that such very good news could be true. They knew that Willie was much better, and that they hoped to be able to return home in summer, but they had not expected to see them so soon.

"Oh, I am so glad I do not know what to do," exclaimed Allen, after they had heard all the particulars of the return. "I think I must do some mischief."

"You had better not, Allen," replied Mr Graham, laughing, "for I was so much displeased with Harry this morning, that I told Mr Lindsey that the idle and careless must not be allowed to accept his invitation. So I advise you all to be very careful both to-night and to-morrow."

"Well, papa," said Eleanor, laughing, "I did not think that you could be so cruel as to propose such a punishment. To keep us from Benholme when we have not seen the Lindseys for nearly a year. Mamma, is not papa very hard-hearted?"

"Not when he has warned you, Eleanor. It will not be his fault now if you do not go."

The children laughingly insisted that Mr Graham

ought to give them a list of the faults the commission of which was to exclude them from Benholme; but he declared that their only motive in asking for it must be that they might indulge in every fault not contained in the list, and that, therefore, he would not give it to them on any account. Everything went on very smoothly the next day, both in the study and during their walk. Allen and Harry were very anxious to ride over to Benholme to see their friends, but they yielded to Mrs Graham's suggestion that Willie might perhaps be tired with his long journey, and that they had better wait till next morning.

"I feel very nervous, papa," said Harry, smiling, as he brought his exercise for Mr Graham to correct after tea. "I so often fail in this stupid exercise."

He stood anxiously watching while his papa read it over, and when he gave him back the book, saying with a smile, "Right, very good," Harry threw it into a far corner of the room and exclaimed, "Well, I am glad you are over, you were my *last* danger."

"I rather think not, Harry," said Mrs Graham. "If you had broken my china jar with your book just now, how could you have escaped the charge of carelessness? You had better be careful still."

"We cannot settle to reading though, mamma," said Eleanor. "It will suit us much better to talk. We

will tell Alice and Douglas all that we will do to-morrow."

"I think that to read aloud as usual would be the safer employment," said Mrs Graham; "but you can do as you please."

All the children agreed with Eleanor that it was impossible to attend to reading, and they clustered together in one of the window seats, telling of all the pleasures of a visit to Benholme, and recalling former scenes and adventures with the Lindseys.

"Marion, have you remembered to write out the chords for Mr B——?" asked Mrs Graham, after they had been thus employed for some time.

"Oh no, mamma; what a plague!" exclaimed Marion, rising unwillingly to seek her music-book.

This little interruption made her feel very cross, and she sat down to write with a most discontented countenance. She did not give her mind at all to what she was doing; and when she had nearly completed her task, she found that she had written over again the chords she had shown to Mr B—— the previous day. Still more thoroughly out of temper, she began to make querulous complaints of everybody and everything. Her pen was too soft, her ink was thick, the laughter and whispering of the others distracted her attention; and when they went to a distant part of the room, in order

to leave her in quietness, she said, in an impatient, peevish voice, that they shook the table so much in passing, that she could not write.

"Marion," said her mamma, "I cannot allow you to remain here, if you make yourself so disagreeable, and I advise you to remember that we cannot take you to Benholme to-morrow if you do not behave better than you are doing."

Marion did not reply, but tears of anger and vexation filled her eyes, and she completed her misfortunes by making a large blot on the paper, when she had, for the second time, almost arrived at the end of her work.

"Was there ever anything so teasing?" she exclaimed, impatiently. "I *cannot* write these stupid, tiresome chords."

"Do not be so foolish, Marion, dear," said Mrs Graham, kindly; "you know this task must be done. Wait quietly for a few minutes, until you have recovered your good-humour; then get some more paper, and you will easily copy out what you have already written."

"I have no time to wait," she answered, almost rudely, as she went to the music-stand. There was no paper in her portfolio, and she turned round, angrily accusing Eleanor of having taken out a sheet.

"I did not touch it, indeed, Marion; but I will give you some of mine," replied Eleanor.

"Then one of you boys must have taken it," she persisted, in the same angry tone.

While the boys were defending themselves, Eleanor had given her what she required, and then she quietly lifted the two sheets of paper that Marion had spoiled, and said, in a pleasant, kind tone—

"Look, Marion, here are two sheets, and that was all you had."

"I wish you would leave my paper alone," said Marion, snatching them out of her hand. "I am sure I have enough to tease me without your interrupting me."

Mr Graham desired Marion to take her writing materials into another room, and not to return until prayer-time. When she came into prayers, she looked as cross and discontented as before, and she left the room immediately after prayers, without speaking to any one.

The other children were very anxious to ascertain, before going to bed, whether she was to go to the Lindseys or not; and they lingered in the drawing-room for some minutes after saying good-night, hoping that something might be said about it. Both Mr and Mrs Graham looked grave and thoughtful; but Elea-

nor, as she watched the expression of their countenances, could not make out whether they were thinking of Marion or not. She did not at first like to ask them; but when Mr Graham roused himself from his reverie, to advise them to go to bed and sleep well, in preparation for the pleasure of the next day, she said, with a little hesitation—

"You will not forbid Marion to go, papa?"

"Why, Eleanor," he answered, with a smile, "I have not been able to answer that question to myself yet. I believe I ought, but I can scarcely resolve to do so, it will be such a disappointment to her, poor girl, and will vex you all so much. Ask mamma what she thinks about it."

Eleanor turned eagerly to her mamma.

"I am afraid that you will think me very hard-hearted," said Mrs Graham, "but I really do not think that we can allow Marion to go. Her temper is much worse than it was some months ago, and she has lately been giving way to those feelings of pettedness and impatience, without making the least exertion to subdue them. I am sure that she requires a severe lesson to arouse her."

"I believe that you are right; but I thought that the alarm which she must have felt, ever since we

sent her out of the room, might be sufficient for the purpose."

Mrs Graham shook her head. "I am sure, by the expression of her countenance," she said, "that she is still unsubdued; and even if it were otherwise, I think you are bound to fulfil your threat. I am very, very sorry for poor Marion, but still I am sure that it will do her good, and that she requires it."

"Please, mamma, do forgive Marion this once," said Eleanor.

"O aunt, do," cried Douglas. "I am sure, as uncle says, that the fright will be enough; and if you speak to her, she will see how wrong her impatience is, and be more careful another time."

"My dear children," answered Mrs Graham, "I assure you that it gives me as much pain as it does you, to think that Marion must be deprived of to-morrow's pleasure; but I cannot yield to your wishes. We have so often spoken to her, and warned her, without any good effect; and now we must allow her to experience the evils of her want of self-command. I think papa agrees with me now."

"Yes," answered Mr Graham, with a smile, "I must confess that you have displayed both more wisdom and more firmness than I have to-night; for I had almost

determined to allow her to go with us. But you have convinced me; and as I have given you the pain of deciding, I shall take upon myself the disagreeable task of speaking to her to-morrow."

The children knew that any further remonstrance would be useless, but Mr Graham saw tears in Eleanor's eyes when she came to bid him good-night.

"My dear little girl," he said, kindly, as he kissed her, "you must not grieve too much on Marion's account. The pain of to-morrow will soon be over; and if it is of use to her in enabling her to subdue her impatient temper, it will save her much unhappiness afterwards. Remember her in your prayers, dear; and ask God to bless this sorrow to her, and to open her eyes to her fault."

Marion quite expected this decision of Mr and Mrs Graham; and when her impatience and anger had passed away, she was quite convinced of the justice of her punishment. Mr Graham's kind, earnest way of speaking to her the next morning made her feel very penitent; and as she had nothing to amuse her during her long hours of solitude, or to cause her to forget her fault, this punishment had an excellent effect upon her.

Mr Graham reminded her how often she had been warned, and advised to check the first beginnings of

impatience and discontent; to resist even secret complaints in her own mind, and to accustom herself to seek excuses for those who had inadvertently offended her. He showed her how completely the reverse of this her conduct had been; how constantly she had aggravated the sense of injury in her mind by dwelling upon the offence, until what was in itself a mere trifle became in her eyes a most serious crime; and how, in cases where no one was to blame but herself, she had tried to throw blame upon others, and to find her consolation in proving them to be in the wrong.

"You are constantly endeavouring, Marion," he said, "to think little of your own offences, and a great deal of the offences of others. In short, if you had desired to *cherish* your natural infirmity of temper, you could not have chosen better means for that end than those you have been employing for some months past; and now it has gained such strength as to be almost beyond your control. Employ the leisure of to-day in recalling to your mind the many instances in which you have failed lately, and try to recollect all the minute details, and to find out the first beginnings and causes of your going wrong. And do not forget, my dearest Marion, to ask for help where alone you can get it."

Marion followed her papa's advice. She set herself steadily to consider all the particular circum-

stances of her fault, and though she found this a very painful task, she persevered bravely; for she remembered that her mamma had often told her that she would be much more successful in her struggles with her temper, if she would take more time to reflect upon the evils of it.

In thus thinking over the occasions in which she had yielded to her besetting sin, Marion was shocked to discover how unkind and selfish she had often been, and what an unpleasant companion she must have proved to the others. She had, as I have said, an excessive desire for approbation, and it was therefore a severe mortification to her to discover how unreasonable, foolish, and unkind she must have appeared to all around her. Had her reflections stopped here, they might have made her more careful to *conceal* her discontent and peevishness, without assisting her to make any real progress in subduing them. But happily her mamma's warning about this recurred to her mind, and feeling the great difficulty of being sincere and single-hearted in her resolutions of amendment, she prayed to God to help her with more earnestness than she had ever done in her life. She felt a sweet satisfaction in telling God of all her little difficulties *and* temptations, and in asking for strength against *them*. She remembered Mrs Graham's words, "That

God has promised to write His law upon our hearts; and that, therefore, we may with perfect confidence ask Him to enable us to keep each separate precept, and we may feel sure that He will answer us." One precept, that Marion was conscious she often forgot, was, "Mind the things of others," and she asked God to help her to fulfil it that very night when the party returned home. She knew that out of kindness to her, they would not begin to tell of their adventures until she asked them, and she resolved to meet them with a kind, cheerful interest and sympathy in all they had been doing. In this she succeeded completely; and although Mr and Mrs Graham were afraid to say much to her from her great tendency to seek praise in all she did, yet Marion had the happiness of seeing that they observed and were pleased with her exertions.

Except from her absence, it had been a complete day of pleasure. Willie was quite well, and every one at Benholme, old and young, master and servants, had been so kind and so very happy to see the Grahams again. Alice and Douglas liked Sophia and Willie quite as much as they had expected; and, in short, the whole proceedings had been a complete contrast to the day spent there in summer with the Wilsons. Marion did feel her regret increased by all this account of their happiness; but the lesson she had received, against

giving way to her own selfish and impatient feelings, had been a very salutary one, and she persevered courageously to the close of the evening in her efforts to forget herself, and rejoice in the happiness of others. And she felt herself well rewarded by her mamma's peculiarly tender "Good-night," and by the single sentence from Mr Graham, "You have done well, my little Marion."

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